

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

At 6:00p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order. With this open meeting being done via conference call, a roll call of participants was taken by Ms. Melissa Bogdan to ensure the minutes accurately reflected those persons on the call and to ensure a quorum of the BBRAG was present.

Members in Attendance

Jack Broderick
Hamilton Chaney
Nicholas Deoudes
Barbara Hitchings
Michael Lord
Pat Lynch
Jim Moran

Jim Ports
Sean Powell
Kurt Riegel
Tim Smith
Tracy Schulz
Steve Wilson

Staff in Attendance

Melissa Bogdan
Jamie Cornelius
Jim Harkness
Richard Jaramillo
Charles Kenny
Kaleigh Leager
R. Earl Lewis
Kelly Melhem
Kim Millender

Mary O’Keeffe
Will Pines
Robert Rager
Mike Rice
Brad Ryon
Joseph Sagal
John Sales
Melissa Williams

Others in Attendance

Ramond Robinson (Transportation Officer, Anne Arundel Co. DOT)
Todd Mohn (County Administrator, Queen Anne’s Co.)
Chris Bartlett (QATV)
Steve Cohoon (Public Facilities Planner, Queen Anne’s Co.)

Approval – Minutes of January 6, 2021 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the January 6, 2021 meeting that were distributed to members.

Two amendments were proposed. Member Lord stated that he was in attendance and Member Riegel requested that text describing his statement on unexploited strategies for flattening the user demand curve, easing peak demand responsible for long backups and delays during certain seasons and times of day be added.

On a motion by Member Riegel with second from Member Lord, the minutes of the January 6 meeting were approved as amended.

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 stated that the Queen Anne's Co. Fire Department has changed the location of their incident management staging area for the eastbound bridge to make it easier for fire and EMS personnel to access. He added that the Queen Anne's Co. Fire Department has asked Lieutenant McGuire Jr. of the MDTA Police if they can move vehicles involved in non-critical incidents to the park and ride off MD 8 as a way of keeping traffic flowing on US 50.

Member Broderick described the ongoing process to update the Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Plan that will continue this year, and which involves discussions with various citizens, local community leaders, and political leaders on what can be done over the next ten years.

Member Hitchings sent out two group emails. One was sent to a listing of Broadneck area residents. They in turn forwarded it to other members in their community if they are the lead person for their HOA. The second mailing was to people located outside the Broadneck area but are frequent users of the bridge and want to be kept informed. Both groups received copies of the January meeting minutes and a brief overview of what took place at the meeting.

When the Broadneck Community Council (BCC) met, she gave an update on any BBRAG meetings and a brief overview of the previous minutes. The council members are then free to pass on the information to their community residents.

Member Lynch provided the following update:

As President of the Broadneck Council of Communities, Inc. -(BCC), I host monthly Board meetings with 9 BCC Board of Directors who represent almost 10K members. Our membership includes our largest community, Cape St. Claire, that represents (est) 8K residents. At every BCC monthly BOD meeting I present a segment from my 'President's Report' on transportation with a focus on the output from our CBBRAG meetings. We also host quarterly member meetings where I present an update on all focus areas for the Broadneck that features output from the most recent CBBRAG telecon/meeting. We have cancelled these live meetings until this summer due to the C-

19 pandemic but will schedule them again as soon as possible. We also publish a Newsletter and post news on our Facebook page where we include updates and notices relevant to our focus areas.

I am also the Vice Chair of the Growth Action Network, Inc. -(GAN)- a Community Advocacy organization that is AA County wide and boasts of over 20K (est) members from Community organizations in South/West and Central AA County. We have weekly GAN Committee meetings, monthly GAN Board meetings and quarterly member meetings--currently held virtually due to the C-19 pandemic. I am also the Transportation Committee Director and present updates on Transportation news/issues both from the CBBRAG meetings as well as any subject related to Transportation.

At meetings of both the BCC and the GAN, I am responsible for Transportation issues that I present regularly. The BCC also includes Barbara Hitchings on our BCC BOD who is also the Vice Chair of the CBBRAG. Barbara also presents additional CBBRAG content, as available from the MDTA. Our current focus area is the announcement of the selection of the Broadneck- Rte #50/301 corridor for the site of a 3rd Bay Bridge span by the MDTA/FHWA. We are carefully engaged in this action plan as the Broadneck Council and the Growth Action Network Boards are in opposition to this NEPA/Tier1-DEIS selection of Alt #7, for another span of this Bay Crossing. To note: there are 13 other alternatives offered for this 3rd crossing. The Bay is 100 miles long with land masses available for the site of this new span. Our Broadneck Peninsula supports two old Bay Bridge spans that draw tens of millions of vehicles through our Peninsula, in particular,- during the 4 summer month. We also suffer from the infusion of dangerous carcinogenic pollutants from the chemical released from the increased number of vehicles that foul and infect our watershed on the Broadneck Peninsula. This needs the immediate attention of the MDTA to stop the movement towards a FEIS and ROD that will lock in the selection of our corridor and draw all new and additional traffic to the Rte #97/Rte #50/301 corridor for at least 100 years. The older spans need to be replaced with wider spans offering additional lanes to facilitate the overload of vehicular traffic now invading the Broadneck Bay Crossing.

MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDTA Acting Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided the BBRAG a status update on the 13 active projects at the Bay Bridge in the Capital Program.

Bay Bridge Capital Projects - April 2021 Update

Pin	Contract No.	Description	AD	NTP	Budget (Thousands \$)	Anticipated Completion	Percent Complete (Construction)	Design (D), Procurement (P), or Construction (C) Phase
2329	BB-2757R	Replace 5KV Feeder on EB Span & Redundant Cable	4/16/19	10/15/19	39,593	Winter 2022	45	C
2342	BB-2754	Rehabilitate Suspension Spans on Westbound Span	3/13/15	7/11/16	46,055	Summer 2021	98	C
2369	BB-2819	Deck Rehabilitation and Miscellaneous Modifications	3/6/19	9/9/19	33,248	Winter 2021/22	75	C
2412	BB-3002	Priority Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications	7/18/16	4/17/17	28,821	Fall 2021	87	C
2459	BB-3007	Rehabilitate Maintenance Facilities of Eastbound and Westbound Spans	12/20/19	9/1/20	6,327	Fall 2021	45	C
2469	BB-3005	Miscellaneous Rehabilitation of the Bay Bridge	10/25/17	7/2/18	9,452	Summer 2021	85	C
2476	BB-3008	Bay Bridge Crossover Automated Lane Closure System	5/24/19	2/3/20	17,943	Fall 2022	50	C
2481	BB-3009	Police Building Generator Replacement	6/26/19	4/6/20	950	Summer 2021	98	C
2317	BB-3014	Bay Bridge Emergency All Electronic Toll (AET) Conversion	9/25/20	1/11/21	48,500	Fall 2022	13	C
2501	BB-2726	Rehabilitate Decks of Eastbound Span - Phase I Deck Widening and Replacement of Deck Truss Spans (Eng. Only)	9/26/19	7/1/21	12,050	Fall 2022 (CMAR) Design Phase	N/A	P
2470	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	7/1/21	15,824	Summer 2024	N/A	P
2470	BB-3004	Construct Project Management Office and Maintenance Equipment Storage Building	8/11/21	12/29/21	4,520	Summer 2025	N/A	D
	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	2,045	N/A	N/A	D - SHA Coord

Responding to a question from Member Broderick, Mr. Harkness stated that the BB-2726 project will be similar to the deck replacement work previously conducted on the westbound suspension span in 2007-2010 and will involve precast sections being placed overnight with the bridge reopening in the morning with contingencies in place to minimize the impacts from possible late openings. Member Broderick indicated that many of the BBRAG members were around during the westbound suspension span deck replacement project, and that the construction approach during that project worked very well for the community.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness described the anticipated benefits from the widening that will also occur as part of the BB-2726 project including improved safety. Mr. Harkness indicated that the eastbound deck replacement project in the deck truss spans is the first phase of a multi-phase/multi-year project that will rehabilitate the decks in the spans across the bridge. Mr. Harkness added that the bridge widening is only feasible in certain areas, like this Phase 1 project, but the area of the suspension span cannot be widened.

Responding to a question from Chair Schulz, Mr. Harkness stated that while the new project management office being constructed as part of the BB-3004 project could potentially be impacted by a new bridge if one is identified as part of a future Tier II NEPA study, its primary purpose is to upgrade existing facilities for current Bay Bridge needs.

Responding to a question from Member Riegel, Mr. Harkness detailed the technology behind the queue detection system of the BB-3012 project and the benefits it is anticipated to offer.

MDOT SHA Administrator Tim Smith stated that extra resources have been allocated to the US 50 corridor in the vicinity of the Bay Bridge and provided details of the additional efforts MDOT SHA undertakes on the eastern shore in conjunction with MDTA and local law enforcement during the summer season which assist with congestion and incident management.

Mr. Smith summarized the construction projects currently ongoing or beginning soon that are listed below:

MDOT SHA Eastern Shore:

- US 50 WB From Airport Road to MD 662B M.P 4. 63 to 8.72 (TA Co. Resurfacing) FY21 Spring
- US 50 WB From Barber Road to Choptank River M.P 19.92 - 24.42 (TA Co. Resurfacing) FY22 Fall
- US 50 EB over Skipton Creek Bridge Approaches @ MP 3.97 & @MP MP 3.63 (TA Co. Patching) FY21 Spring
- MD 328 at MD 404 Intersection Improvement MP 6.13 to 6.35 (CO. Co. Resurfacing) FY22 Fall
- US 301 SB MD 4.18 to 8.715 (KE Co. Crack Sealing) FY 21 Spring
- US 301 SB Ramp 4 @ MP 7.51 and Ramp 5 @ MP 7.97 (KE Co. Crack Sealing) FY 21 Spring

MDOT SHA Western Shore:

- I-97 NB and SB Ramps at MD 3C (Benfield Road), MP 9.60 – 9.95(AA Co Resurfacing) FY 21 Spring
- US 50 from Rutland Road to MD 70 – Rowe Blvd (AA Co Crack Sealing) FY 21 Fall
- I-97 from South of MD 178 to Defend Highway, MP 0.48 – 5.10 (AA Co Crack Sealing) FY 21 Fall

MDOT SHA Lighting Enhancements:

- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at MD 404 (Queen Anne Hwy)
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at MD 662 (Wye Mills Rd)
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at Carmichael Rd
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at MD 456 (Del Rhodes Ave)
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at Sportsman's Neck Rd
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at Outlet Center Dr
- US 50 (Ocean Gateway) at MD 18 (Main St)

The projects will be conducted during off-peak hours with only temporary lane closures to minimize traffic impacts. He added that MDOT SHA is currently upgrading lighting along US 50 to new LED fixtures. All lighting improvements are expected to be completed this spring and summer and will not involve any lane closures.

Responding to a question from Member Hitchings, Mr. Smith stated that the Administration is working with local elected officials and communities to alleviate congestion on local and auxiliary roads on the western shore.

Bay Crossing Study Tier 1 DEIS Public Hearing Reminder

Chair Schulz stated that the public hearings for the Bay Crossing Study were coming up and scheduled to take place via four call-in testimony sessions on April 14 and 15, and two in-person testimony sessions on April 21 and 22. Due to the ongoing public comment period, no updates on the Bay Crossing Study were provided. All testimony requires registration in advance. Mr.

Schulz asked if anyone wished to provide testimony for them to visit baycrossingstudy.com to register.

Unfinished Business

BBRAG Annual Report

Chair Schulz stated that he is continuing to work with MDTA to finalize the report.

Member Ports reminded the Group that according to House Bill 56, the activities of the advisory group's community members in disseminating information from BBRAG meetings to their communities must also be included in the annual report.

Member Broderick stated that while the COVID pandemic has been regrettably detrimental to interactions with communities, there still has been some positive stories. He added that the community reports for the annual report should be coordinated by members through email.

Member Hitchings asked what level of detail is needed in member's community reports. Ms. Bogdan suggested that the date, content, and who it was shared with should be recorded.

New Business

Western Shore Crossover

MDTA Acting Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided an overview of an analysis that MDTA conducted of alternative contraflow conditions on an average Sunday in August. Due to the severe impacts to eastbound traffic for nominal traffic benefits to westbound traffic, MDTA will not be further considering two-way traffic with four lanes westbound and only one lane eastbound.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that the modeling effort included 13 miles of distance in the westbound direction and 5 miles in the eastbound direction.

Responding to a question from Member Riegel, Mr. Harkness stated that the model was created using traffic microsimulation software and that model is calibrated against actual traffic conditions measured in the field.

Traffic Background Resources

MDTA Acting Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided an overview of the resources available to BBRAG members based on a request from Member Riegel concerning traffic data and information related to congestion pricing.

Responding to a question from Member Riegel, Mr. Harkness stated that because travel demand at the bridge is relatively inelastic, MDTA anticipates congestion pricing would minimally reduce traffic volumes during peak periods.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness stated that toll policies and pricing levels for congestion pricing have not been determined by MDTA.

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Moran at 7:58p.m.

The next meeting will be held on July 7, 2021 at 6:00p.m. via Open Meeting Conference Call.

ATTACHMENTS: Bay Crossing Study Tier I NEPA DEIS hearings flyer, Traffic Resources List, Contraflow presentation