

**Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)**

**Wednesday, June 12, 2019**

**Scheduled 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

**Actual Meeting Duration: 6:09 – 7:32 p.m.**

**Members Present**

Jack Broderick  
Nick Deoudes  
Barbara Hitchings  
Barbara Obert  
Pat Lynch  
Tracy Schulz

**MDTA & MDOT SHA Staff**

Melissa Williams  
Kelly Mundle  
Melissa Bogdan  
Richard Jaramillo  
Paul Bruce  
David Ramnath  
John O’Neill  
Ivah Tuckpah  
Mary O’Keeffe

**Other Attendees**

Steve Wilson  
Jim Moran

**Media**

N/A

**Handouts**

N/A

**Opening Remarks – 6:09 p.m.**

Mr. Broderick began the meeting by welcoming attendees and Acting Director John O’Neill. Introductions were made around the room. It was determined that the review meeting format is working, and Mr. Broderick reminded everyone that members of the public are welcome and are encouraged to provide comments. In response to the news of her passing, Nancy Wright was remembered for her kindness and dedication to BBRAG throughout the years. The thoughts of all attendees are with her family and friends during this difficult time. The thoughts of the attendees are also with Bill Nevel, as they were informed of the passing of his wife.

November 7, 2018 minutes were reviewed.

**6:14 p.m. November 7, 2018 minutes were accepted.**

**MDTA Summer Travel Campaign – 6:15 p.m.**

Ms. Mundle presented on the MDTA BaySpan Summer Travel Campaign, which will run again in summer 2019 with much of the same messaging as years' past. This includes:

- @theMDTA Twitter as a means for traffic updates
- Encouraging travelers to plan ahead via baybridge.com, 1-877-BAYSPAN, and @theMDTA on Twitter
- Use of the #forthebirds hashtag in media messages to counter tailgating and texting and driving
- Encouraging travelers to travel during off peak hours to reduce congestion on US 50
- Advertisement through multiple mediums (billboards, radio ads, Pandora, iHeart Radio, Spotify, Facebook, native content, bus wraps, and street teams). New this year are animations of Spike and Otis.

The campaign effort will run primarily from mid-May to mid-September, with various adjustments depending on the media. MDTA and SHA developed a creative handout to encourage and direct motorists to stay on US 50 during their travels. MDTA creative concepts were shown to BBRAG members.

Ms. Obert: There is a delay on updated information on the phone line vs online.

Mr. Broderick: Agreed. Bayspan needs to be update better. Referring to the Twitter account is the best method for receiving updated information.

Mr. Schulz: Memorial Day backup overhead signs in Ocean City would be a helpful method to warn travelers of current conditions.

Mr. Jaramillo: This would be a major effort to coordinate back-up info with SHA.

Mr. Deoudes: Referring to the camera for current travel conditions is the best.

Ms. Obert: SHA and MDTA coordination is important. SHA isn't attuned to BBRAG feedback. What can BBRAG do to communicate with SHA?

Mr. Jaramillo: Importance of Stay on 50 messaging.

## **MDOT Bay Bridge Community System Preservation Updates – 6:24 p.m.**

Mr. Jaramillo provided the following updates on MDTA Bay Bridge system preservation projects:

- Cleaning & Painting Phase IV – 2-year project is continuing. Anticipated completion is June 2020. Some delay due to weather (rain) and contractor resources.

- Westbound Suspension Span Cables Rehabilitation is in progress with anticipated January 2020 completion.
- Miscellaneous Structural Repairs – all initial contract repairs are complete. The remaining work and funds are being used to repair any defects identified during the annual condition inspection. WB suspension span stringer bearing repairs are complete and EB suspension repairs are next.

System preservation projects update for State Highway Administration projects:

- Nothing in immediate areas on the Eastern Shore.
- US 50 initiatives:
  - New signal under construction at WB US 50 at White Lowe Road
  - New signal recently completed in both direction of US 50 at Sixty Foot Road
  - Bike/Ped project underway along US 50 from MD 611 to the Harry Kelley Bridge
  - Concrete spall repairs to the Harry Kelley Bridge (with occasional late-night lane closures)

Commissioner Wilson: It is hard to understand protocols of Bridge operations.

Mr. Broderick: We can provide a presentation on Contra Flow.

Mr. Jaramillo: MDTA is very strict on wind restrictions for safety concerns.

Mr. Deoudes: We hear they are not being implemented. Lanes should be open.

Mr. Wilson: Policies should vary for wind direction.

Mr. Jaramillo: The wind restrictions are set at wind speeds.

Ms. Obert: Is there historical data available for effects of rain during contra flow?

Mr. Jaramillo: We see standard results from data. When the rain begins, there is slippage. We constantly monitor and track the weather.

Mr. Broderick: The Bay water can influence the direction of a storm. It's not easy to predict.

Mr. Jaramillo: Safety is the priority.

Mr. Deoudes: Does MDTA have insurance?

Mr. Jaramillo: MDTA is self-insured.

Mr. Schulz: People want to get home safely.

Ms. Hitchings: Is there data on backups? How many days during a year are there backups? 495 is backed up every day.

Mr. Jaramillo: We are constantly looking for ways to improve and better operate. 15% of the time there are backups.

Ms. Lynch: We have patterns with contra flow conditions. Is there a state of the art method to implement contra flow?

Mr. Wilson: What primarily drives backups – incident or volume?

Mr. Jaramillo: Backups are a capacity issue. There are many factors, it just depends. Disabled vehicles, driver behavior such as slowing down – these all contribute to backups.

### **Introduction and Comments – 6:44 p.m.**

Mr. Broderick introduced Acting Executive Director Mr. John O’Neill, who joined MDTA in 2006. Prior to being named Acting Executive Director on April 16, he served as MDTA’s Chief Operating officer, where he managed operations of the MDTA’s eight toll facilities, and provided direction to E-ZPass Operations, Engineering and Construction, Facilities Management, Traffic Management, and Support Services. Mr. O’Neill also served as program manager for projects such as Electronic Toll Collection, Next Generation and Open Road Tolling. He has also played a vital role in designing and implementing all-electronic tolling on the ICC and on the I-95 Express Toll lanes. Mr. Broderick thanked Mr. O’Neill for coming to the group in person and turned over the discussion to Mr. O’Neill.

Mr. O’Neill thanked everyone for their continued involvement in BBRAG and discussed future changes to BBRAG. He explained that the need for the re-configuration is based on many changes over the past 14 years, including MDTA’s Vision Statement. The changes will refocus BBRAG and bring it back to the group’s original purpose while fulfilling part of MDTA’s Vision of “revolutionizing customer service.” The Executive Director will reach out to the current members to solicit interest in continuing to serve and will also be accepting applications from others who have knowledge or a special interest in the Bridge. He then explained a few of the highlights of the re-configuration, which included:

- A new structure for the group is proposed to take effect on January 1
- A Chairperson and 8-10 members, who will serve a three-year term, will be appointed by the Executive Director. The Chairperson’s term will be decided upon when appointed
- BBRAG will continue to be a public body following the Open Meetings Act
- BBRAG will meet bi-annually in April and October
- Written documents will be prepared, including meeting minutes, community outreach/engagement efforts, and an annual report
- There will be an MDTA employee liaison to assist with administrative tasks

- The Executive Director will evaluate the continuing need for BBAG and provide recommendations to the MDTA Board as to whether or not the group should continue

The Board will vote on a resolution for this re-configuration at the next MDTA Board meeting on June 27.

The discussion was then turned over to those in attendance.

Ms. Obert: Our mission has been changed – will there be opportunities for actionable input?

Mr. O’Neill: We want to hear solutions and communicate to the public new solutions. This should be a formalized process that can be tracked.

Mr. Shulz: Two meetings is not enough. There should be four.

Ms. Lynch: We’ve had meetings quarterly. Who decided on two meetings a year?

Mr. Broderick: We were initially meeting monthly. It’s a concern for BBAG.

Mr. O’Neill: Meeting quarterly is not an issue, if that what the groups wants.

Mr. Deodes: You might have to have special meetings - we hope you would be flexible and open to that.

Ms. Lynch: Are you going to release the BCS results to us?

Ms. Obert: In the last round of public meetings for BCS, there was no Kent Island meeting location and the Chesapeake College location was difficult to get to. This is a potential impact zone.

Mr. O’Neill: Definitely.

Commissioner Moran: Counties should be involved in recommending members.

Commissioner Wilson: Can county commissioners apply?

Mr. O’Neill: You can apply, but this really should be a community group. Please encourage people to submit applications and names. We want to continue or involvement in the counties. Our door is always open, please call any time and look for us at MACO and MML.

Commissioner Moran: Why was the 10k cancelled?

Mr. O’Neill: Due to upcoming projects that will conflict with 10k dates. We offered some dates and it didn’t work for the organizer’s schedule.

Commissioner Moran: What are the major projects?

Mr. O'Neill: The deck overlay on WB 1 with lane closure, resurfacing, and the automated gate system to name a few.

Commissioner Moran: I assume there are lane closures that would impact traffic.

Mr. O'Neill: More information will be coming.

Ms. Lynch: According to the 2015 study, the old span was rated as satisfactory and the new span was rated as fair. When are new ratings available?

Mr. O'Neill: Every year there are inspection reports. The new span is still rated fair.

Mr. Schulz: Has the MDTA considered adding overhead tolling on westbound to capture trucks that are avoiding the Middletown Bypass?

Mr. O'Neill: We are looking in to the possibilities of cashless tolling in the future on both sides.

Commissioner Wilson: We were informed that 40% of users do not have E-ZPass.

Mr. O'Neill: Regarding video tolling, House Bill 105 just passed and we are now able to recover out-of-state EZPass violation fees and fines.

Mr. Broderick: We are looking into contracting a collection agency for buying debt.

Mr. O'Neill: There is an RFI under development for \$102 million to capture out-of-state EZPass violations. This RFI is scheduled to be released this summer.

Commissioner Wilson: What is the current EZPass penetration at the Bay Bridge?

Mr. O'Neill: 70% EZPass, 5% Video for Bay Bridge.

Ms. Lynch: I'm on four boards to represent transportation. We do not get more information than the public. No one asked our advice on the BCS. Our people ask us how to solve our traffic problem.

Mr. O'Neill: This meeting format follows the Open Meetings Act. In many instances, we are bound by state procurement restrictions, which does not allow us to share project details prior to public release.

**Announcements/Concerns/Updates – 7:20 p.m.**

Ms. Obert: No new span is relevant without surrounding infrastructure with SHA, State Police. The scope of this group is to bridge the gap.

Mr. Schulz: Contra flow patterns from changing the west to east is undecipherable. I'm hoping the gate system works.

Mr. Broderick: Question of timely implementation of contra flow.

Mr. Jaramillo: That information was provided to Senator Riley.

Ms. Obert: When is the next meeting?

Mr. O'Neill: August or September.

Ms. Obert: What is the timeframe for applications?

Mr. O'Neill: You'll receive more information regarding timeline following the Board meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned – 7:32 p.m.**

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