

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 4, 2023

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

Jack Broderick
Peter Bradley
Nicholas Deoudes
Barbara Hitchings
Pat Lynch
Jim Moran
Will Pines
Sean Powell
Donald Schloss
Tracy Schulz
Tim Smith

Members Not in Attendance

Kurt Riegel
Steve Wilson

Staff in Attendance

Melissa Bogdan
Brandan Glorioso
Cassie Greenhawk
Jim Harkness
Richard Jaramillo
Kim Millender
Mary O’Keeffe
Robert Rager

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

Others in Attendance

Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne’s County
George Harvey, QACTV
Terry Lehman
Daniel Allen
Brian Ulrich, Anne Arundel County OOT
Jennifer Rohrer
Tim Ryan

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

Approval – Minutes of October 5, 2022 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the October 5, 2022 meeting that were distributed to members with none being put forward.

Member Hitchings motioned to approve the minutes of the October 5 meeting with 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 Broderick stated that he had several interactions with multiple groups adding that he received a unique invitation to participate on a panel in Easton in November run by the Smithsonian Institution. The panel's exhibit was on change in rural America with an emphasis on the Bay Bridge and its impact on the area both positive and negative. He added that on Kent Island, there were many questions from the community concerning contraflow, issues with contraflow during inclement weather, and maintenance operations. He added that perceived delays during contraflow erodes public confidence. Member Broderick stated that the community is interested in Tier 2 and has concerns about heritage and cultural resources sites.

Member Pines stated that the MDTA has made presentations on contraflow and the automated land closure system (ALCS) to the BBRAG at past meetings. He added that the MDTA wants to make it easier for people to understand Bay Bridge operations and is open to ideas from the BBRAG on how to do that.

Member Hitchings stated that she has a distribution list that she uses to keep people on the Broadneck Peninsula informed. She added that some members of her community are very uninformed about the Bay Bridge but she is not sure whether it is because they do not seek the information or are just unable to find it. She added that the two main concerns from her community is whether the ALCS is working and the results of the pilot study at the Oceanic Drive on-ramp. Member Hitchings acknowledged that the MDTA and BBRAG put as much information out to the public as they can.

Member Pines stated that responsibility for communication is on the MDTA but there is a desire in the agency for feedback from the BBRAG and their communities.

MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

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

Bay Bridge Capital Projects - January 2023 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	50,229	Winter 2022/2023	95	C
2369	BB-2819	Deck Rehabilitation and Miscellaneous Modifications	3/6/19	9/9/19	33,248	Winter 2022/2023	96	C
2476	BB-3008	Bay Bridge Crossover Automated Lane Closure System	5/24/19	2/3/20	18,249	Winter 2022/2023	92	C
2516	BB-3014	Bay Bridge Emergency All Electronic Toll (AET) Conversion	9/25/20	1/11/21	51,456	Winter 2022/2023	91	C
2501	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	8/16/21	14,638	Summer 2024	45	C
2504	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	2,045	Spring 2023	61	C
2317	BB-3017	Eastbound Bay Bridge Deck Replacement - Phase 1—Package 1	N/A	1/8/23	140,000	Winter 2025/2026 (Package 1)	0	C
2470	BB-3004	Construct Project Management Office and Maintenance Equipment Storage Building	12/19/22	5/5/22	9,600	Summer 2025	N/A	P

Responding to a question about BB-2757R from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that the cable previously located on the side of the deck was relocated as part of this project so it will not be impacted by BB-3017.

Responding to a question about BB-2757R from Member Broderick, Mr. Harkness stated the barrels present in the roadway were for a lane closure which included preparations for contra-flow but it was decided not to implement that which is why the ALCS gates were not used.

Responding to a follow-up question from Member Moran, Mr. Jaramillo stated that barrels will continue to be used in the crossover area to provide a visible guide for drivers as they traverse the crossover while the ALCS installation is ongoing.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness provided an explanation for why the contraflow merge is one and a half miles from the bridge.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness confirmed that there are three more gantries that must be removed and MDTA is working towards completing that process by the end of January.

Member Moran asked about the number of construction phases for BB-3017. Mr. Harkness noted there are two packages for phase one and discussed what is included in those packages. He stated that MDTA will be ramping up outreach efforts to let the public know what is happening and when; adding that phase one would complete in Winter 2025/2026.

Member Broderick stated that it will be important to understand how the technology used in this project will be different than in the previous project on the westbound span and that it will be helpful for the BBRAG to be able to spread the message on how this will be different. Ms. Bogdan stated that an outreach toolkit will be available to assist with distributing the message.

Melissa Williams, MDTA Director, Division of Planning & Program Development provided an update on the Bay Crossing Tier 2 Study. She discussed the number of attendees at the September 2022 Open Houses and stated that all comments from the public from the open house comment period are posted on the web at www.BayCrossingStudy.com.

Responding to a question from Member Broderick, Ms. Williams stated that it will be several months before alternatives are developed and the width of any infrastructure is known. She added that the MDTA will be holding a series of public meetings to collect public input once the range of alternatives is finalized.

Responding to a question from Member Schulz, Member Pines stated that while a new administration can bring many changes, the study benefits from strong local support and will consider numerous transit-oriented alternatives as part of the process. Ms. Williams stated that the Tier 2 study is fully funded and that the study will determine funding scenarios for the alternatives under consideration.

Responding to a question from Member Lynch, Member Pines stated that the Tier 2 study will determine the form of a potential new crossing but it has not been determined whether that would involve a new bridge span in addition to the two existing bridge structures. Ms. Williams stated that the public recognizes and understands the issues related to the aging of the existing infrastructure.

Member Smith, Administrator of MDOT SHA, provided an update on the MDOT SHA projects in the area. He stated that MDOT SHA completed paving on the Eastern Shore on MD 8 and pavement patching on Dominion Road. A Variable Message Sign (VMS) has been installed at Nesbit Road and will be in place year-round. On the western shore, paving on US 50 from Oceanic Drive to MD 450 has been completed. The ramps from MD 2 to US 50 have also been paved. In 2022, MDOT SHA assisted approximately 1,500 motorists and responded to approximately 2,500 incidents (which are roughly equivalent in numbers to 2021). Additional resources were again deployed during the summer season and MDOT SHA is looking at where additional resources could be located full time.

Member Smith stated that some traffic data from the Bay Crossing Tier 2 study has been received and that MDOT SHA is analyzing origin-destination data to determine where the traffic that passed through the pilot study area is coming and going to. He stated that there remains a need to look at the system as a whole and not just one point; adding that additional improvements and potentially another pilot are being considered and will be presented to the BBRAG before they are rolled out. Member Smith stated that he is hoping to share some of these ideas at the April BBRAG meeting.

Unfinished Business

Community Inquiries and Requests

Status	Requests	Requestor	Outcomes
✓	BBRAG Letter to the Governor	BBRAG	COMPLETE – Letter sent in November 2022.

Member Pines stated that the letter was received and the Governor expressed his thanks.

Bay Bridge Run

Bay Bridge Administrator, Richard Jaramillo stated there were 16,000 registrants (entries were capped at 16,000). A total of 13,877 started and finished the race. He stated that there were relatively high winds that morning which could have led to cancellation but the decision was made to go ahead. A total of 46 states were represented and the average age of participants was 43. Twenty-four people were seen by medical staff with 1 person being transported for treatment. Mr. Jaramillo stated that overall, it was a very safe and successful event.

New Business

Member Moran stated that the Queen Anne’s County delegation is more than happy to sponsor a bill restricting tractor trailers in the left lane during contra-flow with measures to ensure the safety of other travelers. Member Pines stated that Delegate Arentz (District 36) has reached out to MDTA about potential legislation, adding that the best course of action is for the County to create a draft for MDTA to review. He also noted that he is unsure how viable a solution may be as it must be meet certain requirements related to cost and administration.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Moran at 7:47p.m.

The next meeting will be held on April 5, 2023, at 6:00p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: [No attachments]