

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

Jack Broderick
Nicholas Deoudes
Lyn Farrow
John Foster
David Gable
Bruce Gartner
Pat Lynch
Jim Moran
Tracy Schulz
Teri Soos

Staff in Attendance

Huriyyah Ahmad (virtual)
Melissa Bogdan
Billy Clough
Amy Daniel
Charles Kenny
Heather Lowe
Megan Mohan

Others in Attendance

Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County
Todd Mohn, Queen Anne's County
Scott Haas, Queen Anne's County (virtual)
Danny Zawodny (virtual)

Members Not in Attendance

David Arthur
Peter Bradley (Resigned)
Donald Schloss (Resigned)

Mary O'Keeffe
Robert Rager (virtual)
Mike Rice (virtual)
Tim Ryan (virtual)
Brad Tanner

At 6:01p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Membership Updates

Chair Schulz announced that the Governor has appointed Kathryn 'Katie' Thomson as Acting Secretary of Transportation. Member Gartner stated that he had the opportunity to meet with the new Secretary this morning. Member Farrow stated that she has not yet met her but is excited to work with her.

Approval – Minutes of October 1, 2025 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the October 1, 2025 meeting that were distributed to the members with none being put forward.

Member Broderick motioned to approve the minutes of the October 1 meeting with a second from Member Deoudes. 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 Deoudes stated that he attended the Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce business awards program in November where there was lots of talk about bridges. He also attended a Queen Anne's County Veteran and Military Support Alliance (VAMSA) meeting on the eastern shore where the proposal for bike lanes on the bridge without the implementation of protective measures raised concerns about suicides. Member Deoudes informed attendees that the idea is just a proposal at this stage. He added that he was asked the 'usual questions' at holiday parties and noted that there is excitement that there is a tangible option for a new crossing.

Member Broderick also attended the same two meetings as Member Deoudes. He stated that there has been a lot of conversation on Kent Island with good coverage in the press. He added that the Alternative C decision was well received. Member Broderick stated that two questions were raised by people he talked to: what will happen to traffic on Kent Island, and will the lane drop coming off the bridge work in the long term? The former relates to the widening of US 50. Member Brodericks stated that he had a call today with an individual who expressed general support for a bike lane on the new bridge but stressed that suicide prevention measures were very important. The individual is looking forward to more information.

Member Lynch stated that she shared a report of the October BBRAG meeting with the Broadneck Council of Communities (BCCC) and the Anne Arundel County Growth Action Committee.

Member Foster commended the MDTA for the various forums they have held which, he noted, have been beneficial. He requested that the MDTA continue this method of communication.

Report – MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator / Chief Engineer of Operations Terri Soos stated that the agency continues to look at ramp management options. For 2026, they are looking at Thursday closures on the Anne Arundel County side but continue to work with stakeholders regarding this measure. Final recommendations will be made in April. On the Eastern shore, SHA is looking at a gate at MD 8. The program will start weekend before Memorial Day and continue through Labor Day.

MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided an overview of ongoing projects at the Bay Bridge.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that the Phase 2 deck replacement project for the eastbound span has completed design but that a scheduling issue has pushed procurement to later this year. This phase will be approximately similar in length and number of panels to Phase 1.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that the pier protection project will accommodate a new bridge with both project teams in coordination with each other.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness stated that there is a concept of the design of the pier protection but that the project is still in procurement. The design-build procurement method was chosen to allow for an innovative design. The project is currently undergoing permitting and geotechnical investigations.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that there is a design vessel being used for the pier protection project.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that teams continue to inspect and maintain the current bridge structures. As the outcome of the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA Study is not yet known, and because decisions need to be made years in advance to get the necessary funding and resources in place, maintenance work will continue on the existing structures. Member Gartner added that as there are no alternative routes or detours for the essential crossing, the MDTA must continue efforts to maintain the structures.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Bay Bridge Deputy Administrator Billy Clough stated that automated lane closure gate strikes occur approximately a couple of times a month.

Report – Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA Study

Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 NEPA Project Manager, Heather Lowe, provided an update to the BBRAG with the presentation given to the MDTA Board on December 18, 2025.

Member Gartner shared his appreciation of the effort made by the team during the project, adding that getting public to the meetings in February will be important.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Ms. Lowe stated that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will show potential impacts from the widening of US 50. The team is doing their best to stay within the right-of-way and minimize impacts to adjacent properties.

Responding to a question from Member Lynch, Ms. Lowe stated that utilizing the shoulders for bicycle traffic is complicated as the path needs to be separated from motorized traffic with a barrier. The public can provide their input at the upcoming hearings.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Member Gartner stated that the MDTA board did not make a decision on the inclusion of a shared use path on a new bridge, but rather, the recommendation to continue studying it. Member Moran shared concerns related to the length of the path, weather conditions, and emergency situations.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Ms. Lowe stated that the westbound lanes on Alternative C transition from five to four west of Oceanic Drive. She added that various reasons cause the bridge section to have a lower capacity than the land-based roadway, hence the additional lanes on the bridge. Member Gartner stated that the DEIS will have comparisons of all the alternatives for readers to see the relative differences.

Member Gable stated a preference for an 8-lane roadway on US 50 to MD 404. Ms. Lowe stressed that Alternative C is the preferred alternative and not the selected alternative. The DEIS will contain additional information on environmental impacts, cost, etc.

Member Foster inquired as to funding for construction. Member Gartner stated that assuming the MDTA's current fiscal position, a toll increase in FY 2028 (with toll increase hearings in FY 2027) would be necessary to move closer to construction. He noted that there have been no toll increases in ten years and the MDTA is not able to fund a new bridge with current funding. Responding to a question from Member Foster about what would be needed to keep the project moving, Member Gartner stated that a FY27 toll increase would be needed to fund existing programs with a subsequent decision on funding for new a new Bay Bridge. He added that the current costs of a new Bay Bridge take into consideration lessons from the Key Bridge rebuild regarding schedule, materials cost, etc.

Unfinished Business

Bay Bridge Run

Bay Bridge Deputy Administrator Billy Clough read a statement that was released after the event was cancelled:

Good evening,

As you may be aware the 2025 Bay Bridge Run was canceled due to weather.

During inclement weather, The MDTA does not implement 2way Traffic Operations which is required in order to close the East bound span to allow for the event to occur.

The decision to cancel the race was made by MDTA in consultation with Corrigan Sports at 8:00PM the night prior to the event.

Subsequent Cancellation notifications to customers and race participants were issued shortly after the decision was made, alerting motorists the event was canceled and the bridge is open for normal traffic.

Please be assured this decision was not taken lightly, however the safety of the Bridges customers, employees, and runners are the MDTA's top priority.

Although the event was canceled, a Public Safety After Action Review meeting was held on December 2nd where we went over challenges faced and improvement suggestions.

We will be meeting with Corrigan Sports in the upcoming weeks to begin discussing the 2026 Run.

Lane Use Control Update

Member Gable inquired about efforts to address lane use control violations and confusing lane use control signals. Mr. Clough detailed that recent lane use controls were implemented due to wind restrictions that were in place for trucks. Member Gartner stated that travelers will always see wind restrictions notices and there are always delays when restrictions are in place.

Member Gartner reiterated a need for legislation to implement automated lane use control enforcement. He added that the MDTA is working with consultants on the details of concepts to determine costs, effectiveness, etc. The MDTA needs time to complete these tasks, and any system would likely not be ready until 2027.

New Business

Flag Display Request

Member Gartner stated that the MDTA received a request from the Queen Anne's County Veterans of Foreign Wars to fly a flag from the bridge on Independence Day. He added that such a display was deemed unworkable with the MDTA instead looking into the feasibility of a flagpole on the eastern shore for a flag no larger than 30' by 60'.

Bay Crossing Study Support Letter

Member Schulz presented a letter drafted in support of the BCS to be sent by the BBRAG. Member Broderick stated that he worked with Member Schulz to include items of general concern to members.

Member Broderick motioned to approve the sending of the letter as presented with a second from Member Deoudes. The letter was approved with a unanimous vote.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 6:00p.m.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Foster at 7:25p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: Bay Crossing Study Recommended Preferred Alternative and DEIS Presentation, BBRAG Support of Alternative C Letter.