

**Maryland Transportation Authority  
Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group**

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, April 2, 2014  
**MDTA Bay Bridge Police Building**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jack Broderick, Chairman  
Nancy Wright  
Tracy Schulz  
Bill Nevel

Pat Lynch  
Barbara Hitchings  
Nick Deoudes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:**

Liz Broderick (wife of Chairman)

**MDTA STAFF:**

Gordon Garretson  
John Sales  
Kevin Weber  
Eric Backes

Patrick Fleming  
John Narer (SHA)  
1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Adam Watkowski (MDTA Police)  
Richard Jaramillo

**Call to Order and Welcome**

Chairman Jack Broderick called the meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order at 6:03 p.m. Introductions were made by all in attendance.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of the October 2, 2013 meeting were approved. A motion for adoption was made by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. Hitchings with all members in concurrence.

**Update on Bridge Activities**

Mr. Garretson, Bay Bridge Administrator, and Mr. Weber, Construction Manager for the Bay Bridge, updated the group on other projects on the bridge and other newsworthy information.

- Painting – Phase II was completed in October of 2013. Phase III is 28% complete and a little behind schedule due to weather, looking to bring in additional resources to meet the May 2015 completion date. Phase IV has an anticipated May 2015 start date.
- The project to install an uninterruptable power supply is nearing completion
- The project to replace the concrete apron and the toll booths is ongoing. 3-4 lanes will be closed for 2 months at a time. They are hoping to start the project around the middle of October 2014 and finish before traffic begins to pick up again on weekends around St. Patrick's Day 2015.
- Dehumidification on the WB Bridge is complete. EB Bridge is 63% complete and will require closures on Mondays and Tuesdays until 3:00 p.m. The entire project is expected to be completed in February 2015.
- Contraflow will continue only on Thursday and Friday from Mid-April until April 20. After that time, Contraflow will likely occur Monday through Friday.
- During the Winter there were 24 snow events. March 12 was the most significant event.

Mr. Broderick asked what the cause of the fire was during the painting project. Mr. Garretson responded that a cigarette was most likely the cause of the fire and this event resulted in the hiring of a construction safety coordinator for the bridge.

Mr. Nevel asked if the dehumidification was “working”. The response was that the contractor has rewrapped the cables, each pier has a plant and it is moving air to reduce moisture and to help reduce humidity.

Mr. Deoudes said that the new cable wrapping looked larger. Mr. Garretson responded that the wrapping was larger and that is all due to the dehumidification system.

### **Bay Bridge Safety Improvements**

Mr. Sales, MDTA Public Affairs Manager, gave a report on \$500,000 in safety improvements that will be implemented on the Bay Bridge by the Memorial Day Weekend, signifying the start to the summer season.

The planned improvements are:

- Requiring the use of headlights at all times on the bridge with “Mandatory Headlight Use Area” signs installed along both the westbound and eastbound bridges. Failure to use headlights will result in a possible ticket for “Failure to obey a traffic control device”. It is expected that there will be a grace period lasting 30 days or possibly until Labor Day where warnings will be issued instead;
- Adding curve warning signs and 40 mph speed-limit signs prior to curve on eastbound bridge;
- Installing “Your Speed Is” signage on the bridge, Patrick clarified that these are not speed cameras and are not used for speed enforcement;
- Adding “Congestion Ahead” signs with flashers to activate during heavy congestion to warn motorists of the potential for slowed/stopped vehicles; and
- Adding a “Do Not Tailgate” sign to the eastbound bridge approach during times of congestion.

### **SHA Update**

Mr. John Narer from the State Highway Administration provided an update on various projects on roads maintained by SHA near the Bay Bridge. Among the updates:

MD404-A Notice to Proceed has gone out to start dualization at MD480 to Norwich Creek and replace the bridge at Tuckahoe Creek. This is a two year contract.

MD304/US301-This project is fully funded and they are preparing to advertise the contracts in June. Notice to Proceed is expected after Labor Day.

Dover Bridge-The contract was advertised in mid-March, expect to open in May.

Severn River Bridge Lane Addition/Extention-Structural Analysis of the bridge shows that it could have a 7<sup>th</sup> lane added that would extend the lane that comes from the entrance from Rowe Blvd. onto EB US50 over the bridge. There are several operational and construction related issues that need to be considered before SHA would make the decision on whether or not to proceed.

Mr. Lynch asked how long it would take to remove the barrier from the bridge in order to allow for the lane movement necessary to facilitate the extra lane. Mr. Narer was not sure, and stated that this is one of the major concerns in going forward on this project because the barrier sits on top of the deck joint.

Mr. Nevel asked if SHA was working with Anne Arundel County on this matter. Mr. Narer said yes.

Mr. Lynch also asked when this would all start, and Mr. Narer was unsure.

Mr. Nevel asked if there was an idea as to how much this project would cost. Mr. Narer was unsure as SHA has not done that analysis yet and this is a unique situation that they would not be able to compare to any similar project. Mr. Nevel also inquired regarding what environmental permits would be necessary. Mr. Narer said that it would probably require some amount of permitting, but that would not be extensive because the work would mostly be done on existing roadway.

## **Other Business**

### **Legislation**

Mr. Patrick Fleming gave an overview of several pieces of legislation that had come before the Maryland General Assembly during the 2014 Session. The bills he discussed were:

HB1263- Maryland Transportation Authority - Chesapeake Bay Bridge - Toll Collection-This bill would have required the MDTA to switch to All Electronic Toll Collection (AET) at the Bay Bridge by 2024, with the option to leave one cash lane. The MDTA opposed this legislation and it was given an unfavorable vote in the House Environmental Matters Committee. Mr. Fleming explained that the MDTA does hope to someday implement AET at all of its facilities, but the Bay Bridge, due to several factors including current E-ZPass penetration numbers (particularly during the peak summer season), difficulties surrounding contraflow operations and other operational issues, is not a candidate to be among the first to make the switch.

HB389/SB730- Maryland Transportation Authority - All-Electronic Tolling – Study-As originally drafted, this bill would have required the MDTA to maintain at its legacy facilities, including the Bay Bridge, at least one cash toll lane and as many additional cash toll lanes as necessary to ensure that motorists are not unduly delayed in passing through the toll plaza. Mr. Fleming explained that the MDTA worked with the sponsors of the legislation to amend the bill to where it now puts a moratorium on going to AET at the Hatem Bridge and requires a study of the effects of AET at all facilities, requires the Authority to study and analyze various issues relating to AET implementation at all of its legacy facilities, and requires MDTA to submit the report to particular legislative committees and local elected officials.

Income Tax Subtraction Modification Bills-Mr. Fleming concluded his legislative report by explaining that there were various bills considered that would have created a Maryland State Income Tax subtraction modification for tolls paid by those people using MDTA facilities as part of their commute. Mr. Fleming said that MDTA did not oppose these bills, but none of them passed.

### **Drive Over Service**

There was a brief discussion regarding the Bay Bridge Drive Over service. It was explained by Mr. Garretson and others that the MDTA no longer provides a drive-over service; however, Kent Island Shuttle Service/Kent Island Express provide this service. Ride Over Services provide around 3,500-4,000 trips per year.

### **NTSB Report**

Mr. Fleming informed the group that the National Transportation Safety Board released its report on the July 2013 incident that resulted in a vehicle falling from the eastbound span of the Bridge. The report reiterated the earlier findings of the MDTA that the incident was the result of driver error, specifically inattentiveness and driver distraction on behalf of the tractor trailer driver that was involved in the incident.

### **Next meeting:**

The next meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group will be held on Wednesday, July 9, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned about 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Fleming