

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

Meeting Summary

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 4, 2012
MDTA Bay Bridge Police Building

PRESENT:

Jack Broderick, Chairman
Tracy Schulz
Barbara Span Obert

Nick Deoudes
Barbara Hitchings

SHA STAFF:

John Narer

MDTA STAFF:

Gail Moran
Kerry Brandt
Dan Williams

Gordy Garrettson
Richard Jaramillo
Lesli Leath

Call to Order

Chairman Jack Broderick called the meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order at 6:04 p.m. He welcomed all attendees.

Minutes:

The minutes were approved as read.

US 50 "Brick Bridge":

Mr. John Narer, State Highway Administration (SHA) senior project engineer, outlined efforts by the SHA to repair the Brick Bridge on US 50 over US 301 in Queenstown. The bridge was constructed in 1950. SHA has developed a long-term maintenance plan for the bridge to repair known problems with the bridge.

Bids for the project are to be submitted by April 5, 2012. A Notice To Proceed is expected on or about June 1, 2012, with construction slated to begin after the peak-travel period around September 24, 2012. Traffic may be diverted from US 50 onto MD 213 and US 301 to better accommodate construction during that period. The scope of the project will include the re-pointing and cleaning of the brick, resurfacing of the bridge and replacement of corroded steel. The scenic nature of the bridge will be maintained. The project will not expand the capacity of the bridge. There will be times when there will be total closure of US 301 to remove and erect steel. The closures will take up to 15 minutes and will be done between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Variable message signs will alert travelers of these scheduled road closures during the two-week period leading up the closures. The project will be funded with Federal and MDOT monies.

Bay Bridge Construction and Preservation Projects

Dan Williams, MDTA's Director of Engineering, outlined several preservation projects for the Bay Bridge:

- Westbound Span painting phases 1 and 2 are underway. Phase 1, which is funded at \$21 million, began in fall 2011 and is 30% complete. Phase 2, which will repaint the suspension spans and tower is underway and will cost an estimated \$20 million. Phase 3 painting will begin in spring 2013 and will paint the deck trusses on either side of the suspension span and will cost an estimated to exceed \$40 million. Phase 4 will paint the truss and will begin in 2014. Scaffolding will be built for Phase 2. It will take 16 days to install the rigging on the 274 foot towers. Closures will be necessitated during this installation. In all cases, paint will preserve the structural steel.
- The painting of the eastbound span is slated to begin between 2018 and 2020.
- On-call contractors are on site for repairs, which include pot-hole repair to major projects.
- There are plans for substructure repairs above the waterline. This work will begin in the 2012-2013 winter.
- Bridge inspections are on-going. Expect to see snoopers, scaffolding and free-climbing associated with these inspections. Some inspections currently underway are finishing.
- Suspension cable dehumidification is scheduled to begin this summer. This work is critical and will involve the replacement of neoprene wrapping on the cables to insure that the cables remain in good shape. This work is replacing wrappings installed on the bridge in 1974-1975. Project costs are estimated to exceed \$50 million.

Gordon Garretson, Bay Bridge Facility Administrator, outlined other projects and activities on the bridge. They include:

- A containment system to capture debris is being installed. This will comply with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pollution requirements.
- Overhead message signs are being installed, beginning spring 2012. The eastbound span will receive the signs first. A new sign will be installed between MD 213 and MD 404 followed by the installation of a replacement sign near Cox Creek. Both signs are in Queen Anne's County.
- Traffic-monitoring cameras and related wiring will be replaced. This action is necessitated because the bridge vibrations have rendered the cameras inoperable. The new cameras should help to improve the police and emergency vehicle response time for crashes and disabled vehicle on the bridge.
- Daytime closures on the right lane of the eastbound span are anticipated through mid-May.
- Traffic is increasing and the use of contra-flow on the westbound span is being expanded as traffic patterns necessitate. A traffic count of over 3,200 vehicles per hour is the threshold for converting Lane 3 into contra-flow.
- Milling and line striping continues.
- Lane markings near the toll plaza were completed on March 30, 2012. The goal was to better direct traffic to all 11 toll lanes and help operators identify lanes.
- The double-white lines on the eastbound span are being scheduled for restriping.

Mr. Garrettson said that there has been a two-percent increase in 2012 traffic over 2011 traffic. The American Automobile Association (AAA) says that people continue to travel, but many are taking shorter trips.

Bay Bridge Safety Campaign:

Lesli Leath, MDTA Marketing Coordinator, outlined the safety campaign for summer driving. The campaign centers on the Bay Bridge and those traveling to the Eastern Shore. It includes billboards and Ocean City bus wraps. New headlines used in the promotions this year are “Check both ways before you cross” and “Use E-ZPass.” There will be radio spots on the larger radio stations promoting this message. Interactive marketing also is being used. Campaigns for the Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day holidays will stress that drivers should plan ahead and avoid heavily-traveled times. The total budget for this campaign is \$500,000, down from \$700,000 in recent years.

Currently, E-ZPass usage on the Bay Bridge is about 64 percent during the week and 53 percent on weekends. E-ZPass usage is increasing.

Other business:

Gail Moran outlined legislation that passed the Maryland General Assembly that affects the Bay Bridge. SB 820 requires the MDTA to implement additional public notification, review and comment procedures before adopting an increase in tolls, fees or other charges on any part of a fixed toll transportation facilities project or in mileage rate ranges, pricing periods, toll zones, fees or other charges on a variably priced transportation facilities project. Provisions place in law and broaden MDTA’s current Code of Maryland (COMAR) regulations concerning toll and fee modifications and required public outreach.

There will be no bridge walk this year. The status of future walks is not known.

Next meeting:

The next meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group will be held on Wednesday, July 11, at 6 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned about 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Moran