

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

Meeting Summary

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, July 11, 2012
MDTA Bay Bridge Police Building

PRESENT:

Jack Broderick, Chairman	Nick Deoudes
Tracy Schulz	Nancy Wright
Barbara Hitchings	Delores Green
Pat Lynch	

MDTA STAFF:

Harold Bartlett	Gail Moran
Gordon Garrettson	Kerry Brandt
Derek Jones	Doug Hutcheson
Mike Rice	

Guests:

Rev. Gary Stiegler

Call to Order

Chairman Jack Broderick called the meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order at 6:12 p.m. He welcomed Harold Bartlett, Executive Secretary of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and all attendees. Members and MDTA staff introduced themselves.

Minutes:

The minutes were approved, as amended.

Report from the Maryland Transportation Authority Executive Secretary

Mr. Bartlett discussed some recent activities at the Bay Bridge.

1. He said that the passage of the Ports America cranes headed to the Seagirt Marine Terminal on June 20, 2012 went very well. The passage under both the Bay and Key bridges was timed to coincide with low tide and was done during daylight to maximize visibility.

The MDTA decided to close both structures when the cranes crossed underneath to assure bridge vehicle safety. The Bay Bridge was closed for approximately 35 minutes, while the Key Bridge was closed for about 25 minutes.

2. There was a storm accompanied by unexpected high winds at about 11:00 p.m. on June 29. There were 30-mile per hour winds on the bridge. They increased to 80-mile per hour

winds very rapidly and with little warning. After 11 p.m., a tractor trailer was traveling east bound when it struck the guard rail and turned on its side. The driver was taken to the hospital and sustained non-life threatening injuries. BBRAG member Tracy Schultz said that he was on fire department duty at the time and retrieved the injured truck driver from the Bridge, delivering him to a waiting ambulance. There was no damage to the bridge but the truck took some time to be removed from the bridge. Both spans were closed during that time.

Mr. Bartlett said that Bridge and other MDTA staff monitor the weather conditions carefully. New ultrasonic wind equipment has been ordered and will be installed later this year. Also, new cameras are on order and should be installed in the coming months. In addition, bridge policies concerning warnings and lane and bridge closures are being evaluated and will be changed, when deemed appropriate. As a stop-gap measure, the State Highway Administration (SHA) has loaned camera vehicles, and the MDTA Police have provided their command center system vehicle for use at the Bridge. Traffic is being monitored constantly and MDTA Police provide information on bridge conditions continuously. Mr. Derek Jones, MDTA Director of Operations, said that staff are reviewing BaySpan hotline accuracy and will implement any needed improvements to assure that the public is well informed.

Mr. Bartlett, joined by Director of Engineering Doug Hutcheson and Bay Bridge Facility Administrator Gordon Garrettson, reported that the scaffolding in place for westbound span painting was thoroughly checked after the storm. The tarps are designed to survive up to 110 miles per hour. They are intended to minimize distracted driving during this period of the repainting of the westbound towers. Responding to a question, Mr. Garrettson said that the presence of the tarps has not resulted in an increase in vehicle accidents. Many of the tarps shielding the scaffolding were ripped by the winds on June 29 and many more tarps were removed the day following the storm to assure there is not further damage or threat to vehicle safety. Everything has been completely checked and is safe. Staff constantly monitor conditions on the bridge. The primary goal is traffic safety. We are prepared to close the bridge when conditions warrant, Mr. Bartlett said. However, we know that people rely on the bridge for safety and emergency reasons, such as reaching the hospital. So when a decision is made, there is a careful balance that must be achieved, with safety decisions constantly in the forefront.

Replacement cameras have been ordered and will be installed on the Bridge later this year. The Bridge's motion is hard on cameras and shakes them, thus disabling them. So, replacements are needed periodically. MDTA also relies on regular police patrols for information about Bridge conditions. Lastly, motorists provide invaluable information about bridge events and road conditions.

Bay Bridge Construction and Preservation Projects

Mr. Hutcheson reported on many large-scale projects underway or planned for the Bridge.

- MDTA has begun a four-phase painting project on the westbound span. Phase 1, costing \$21 million, is about half completed; the steel girders are being painted. It will be completed in spring 2013. Phase 2 will paint the suspension span. It costs \$20 million and should be completed in spring 2013, as well. Phase 3 will paint the westbound truss. This \$36 million project will last two years. The project will be bid later this summer. Phase 4 painting of the

thru-truss will cost an additional \$15 million and will begin in summer 2013. Painting of the eastbound span is scheduled to begin in the 2018-2020 time frame.

- The repairs to the water piers are costing about \$5 million and are about two-thirds complete. The project should be complete by the end of 2012.
- Cable re-wrapping and humidification of the eastbound and westbound spans is a \$54.1 million project, which is scheduled to begin this September, 2012. The dehumidification system will be the first installed in the United States; it has been used successfully in Japan and Europe. The project will necessitate traffic disruptions.

Mr. Garretson reported on many other projects.

- The replacement of the lane signals is complete with the exception of punch list items. The new signals will be more reliable.
- The new overhead message sign at MD 404 is awaiting the necessary electrical hook-up. The replacement of the existing overhead message sign at the Cox Creek location has been delayed by ground water issues.
- Installation of the weather station design complete. Upgrade to existing wind monitors to begin this month. Full weather installation scheduled to begin March 2013 but we are attempting to accelerate..
- Isolation points for a high voltage system on the eastbound span scheduled to begin this fall.
- Cracks in a six-inch conduit for Maryland Broadband are being repaired and conduit is being re-supported. The conduit is located under the westbound span.

Due to traffic loads, MDTA has cancelled Friday eastbound lane closures for maintenance/construction and Thursday eastbound lane closures time are limited to before 1:00 p.m.

Traffic volumes have increased 1.5 percent in recent months. An increase in traffic volumes of this magnitude has not been seen since 2007. We have seen higher than normal traffic volumes on Sunday mid day that has been creating slight backups.

The repainting of yellow center lines is scheduled for the eastbound span. This will necessitate eastbound closures.

Outreach activities:

Kerry Brandt reported that there have been several recent email blasts to Bay Bridge subscribers announcing work or road conditions on the Bridge.

Marketing efforts to promote planned driving over the bridge continue with bus wraps and boat wraps in Ocean City. Mr. Broderick asked whether MDTA would have a booth at the Queen Anne's County Fair this year. [*After the meeting staff determined that MDTA would not be at the Fair in 2012.*]

Bay Bridge mascots Spike and Otis now have a Facebook page. The page is being shared a lot.

Next meeting:

The next meeting of the Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group will be held on Wednesday, October 3, at 6 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned about 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Moran