

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Regular Meeting

OPEN SESSION

Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

David Arthur
Jack Broderick
Peter Bradley
Nicholas Deoudes
Lyn Farrow
Bruce Gartner*
Pat Lynch
Jim Moran
Tracy Schulz
Will Pines**

Members Not in Attendance

John Foster
David Gable
Donald Schloss

*Member Gartner was represented at the meeting by MDTA Chief Operating Officer, Richard Jaramillo

**Member Pines was represented at the meeting by MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator / Chief Engineer of Operations Teri Soos

Staff in Attendance

Melissa Bogdan
Billy Clough
Amy Daniel
Ken Fender
Jim Harkness
Charles Kenny
Kim Millender

Robert Rager
Mike Rice
Tim Ryan
Brad Ryon
Brianna McEachern
James Turner
Melissa Williams

Others in Attendance

Todd Mohn, Queen Anne's County
Daniel Allen

At 6:02 p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Outgoing BBRAG Chair Schulz stated that per the BBRAG By-Laws, the BBRAG must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

Member Deoudes motioned to nominate Member Schulz for re-election with a second from Member Broderick. Member Schulz was elected Chair with a unanimous vote.

Member Deoudes motioned to nominate Member Broderick for re-election with a second from Members Moran. Member Broderick was elected Vice-Chair with a unanimous vote.

Approval – Minutes of April 2, 2025 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the April 2, 2025 meeting that were distributed to the members with none being put forward.

Member Farrow motioned to approve the minutes of the April 2 meeting with a second from Member Lynch. The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

2025 BBRAG Annual Report

Chair Schulz stated the report was submitted to the Governor and General Assembly on July 1. He opened the floor to the group for discussion with Member Broderick commending the quality of the report.

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 Doudes stated that backups are still the biggest issue with people believing that the MDTA is not doing a good enough job managing them. He added that there is a need for more than the five travel lanes currently in operation and understands that until additional capacity is constructed, there will be no improvement to congestion or travel times. Member Deoudes also stated that timing is an issue with the congestion as it only occurs at certain times and that there needs to be a positive outlook with regards to a new bridge and additional travel lanes.

Member Broderick thanked the MDTA for attending the recent Kent Island Day held in May with a strong and active presence with staff from the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA study sharing information about the project, and the MDTA Police Color Guard marching in the parade.

Member Broderick also thanked SHA for delaying the ramp closure program to facilitate Kent Island Day. He added that the program appears to be working well. Member Broderick stated that community concerns he hears most often concern the new bridge, its design, and how compact the US 50 crossing will be on Kent Island. Member Broderick stated one local concern is a business proposal at Cox Neck Rd and Postal Rd for a Dunkin' Donuts, which the

community feels will add additional traffic into an already busy intersection. He added that the community is hoping for SHA support in the matter.

Member Bradley stated that on June 27th, mobile app Waze did not show the Exit 32 on-ramp as being closed with the result that the service road blocked up completely as drivers attempted to access US 50 at Exit 30. Ms. Soos stated that SHA coordinates with Waze and other app companies regarding the ramp closures.

Member Arthur stated that he recently met with the Mayor of Annapolis and discussed Bay Bridge matters. He added that there is frustration within the public over the congestion and the fact that there is nothing that can be done immediately. He emphasized the need for patience.

Member Lynch shared a number of concerns her community has including a traffic signal at Pleasant Plains Rd where there is no left-turn light for eastbound traffic and the community feels there should be, and a number of inactive light poles at Exit 28 that have been a concern for five years. Ms. Soos stated that a contractor is scheduled to start this week inspecting and replacing lights and will be looking at light fixtures at five interchanges on the western shore. Member Lynch stated that weeds at Cape St. Clare Rd are presenting a visibility issue and that the Sandy Point reservation system seems to be helping with traffic. Member Lynch expressed thanks to Ms. Soos and Kim Tran for attending a recent Broadneck Council of Communities (BCCC) meeting and presenting an update on transportation issues in the area, and Melissa Williams, Heather Lowe, and Eric Almquist who presented more detail on the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA Study than she'd seen elsewhere. She added that the meeting ran until 10pm and the Council are hoping to make it an annual event.

Member Schulz shared details of a recent emergency event where a helicopter was landed on the westbound span of the Bay Bridge in order to transport a crash patient to shock trauma.

Report – MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

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

Member Broderick inquired about efforts to address roadway surface issues. Mr. Harkness stated that crews have poured 42 link slabs (about 24% of total) at a rate of 2-3 pours per shift. The work is still weather dependent however. Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that there are no issue with cracking and there has not been a need to mill the completed surfaces outside of small areas. Member Deoudes inquired if the cranes will remain in the water even though deck replacement has paused for the summer season. Mr. Harkness stated that the contractor will be performing other work on different parts of the bridge so the cranes will remain for the foreseeable future.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness stated that strengthening work on the trusses is related to the additional weight of the widened deck section with stiffening plates being added in addition to replacement of some original rivets with high-strength bolts.

Member Moran inquired about the design of the Bay Bridge pier protection with Mr. Harkness stating that it is in-progress towards a 30% design to be used to procure a construction manager

at risk (CMAR) contract. Member Moran questioned the wisdom of implementing pier protection on bridge structures likely to be replaced soon with the group entering into a discussion on the matter. Mr. Harkness stated that the design team are coordinating with the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA study team to ensure that the pier protection design neither precludes, nor is precluded from, a future bridge design.

MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator/Chief Engineer of Operations Terri Soos introduced Ken Fender (SHA District engineer for Queen Anne's County). Ms. Soos stated that SHA has completed resurfacing on White Hall Rd with Member Bradley's striping request being received but only after the striping was already laid. She added that his request was not feasible due to left turn radius needs producing a lack of space for an additional right turn lane. Ms. Soos stated that SHA will also be resurfacing Oceanic Drive and College Pkwy after Labor Day. She added that the lighting at interchanges has already been discussed.

Ms. Soos stated that in Queen Anne's County, SHA looked at the MD 8 signal and agreed that there was a timing issue. Timing tweaks were made but SHA will wait for school to be back in session to confirm their effectiveness. Ken Fender offered to work with Tracy on the matter.

Report – Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA Study

MDTA Director of Planning and Program Development, Melissa Williams, provided an update for the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA study:

- MDTA's study team has been working closely with the Federal Highway Administration, federal and state environmental resource agencies and both Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's Counties in completing the Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement or DEIS which is scheduled for late Fall.
- DEIS Public Hearings would also be held in late fall, a few weeks following the release of the DEIS.
- This will allow the public and other stakeholders time to review the DEIS and decide whether to provide public or private testimony.
- The DEIS will present the results of the detailed engineering studies along with the anticipated natural, social, and cultural resource impacts associated with each of the detailed study alternatives.
- MDTA anticipates holding one virtual and two in-person Public Hearings. One in-person will be held in Anne Arundel County and the other in Queen Anne's County similar to our 2022, 2023 and 2024 Public Open Houses.
- Staff highlighted that MDTA will be announcing its Recommended Preferred Alternative or RPA either late July or August. BBRAG will receive the RPA Press Release via email.
- NEPA activities have been advancing rapidly with a Final Environmental Impact Statement and Federal Highway Administration Record of Decision anticipated in late Fall of next year (2026).

- As many of you know, MDTA continues to receive a lot of interest from bicycle advocates wanting a shared pedestrian and bicycle path as part of the new bridge, so staff shared that a shared use path, separated from the vehicle lanes is still being considered as part of MDTA's Recommended Preferred Alternative.

Unfinished Business

Chair Schulz stated that there was no unfinished business from the April 2 meeting and none was brought forward.

New Business

Chester River Beach/Nesbit/Oceanic Access

Member Moran requested that contra-flow be stopped earlier on Sunday to address westbound backups. Mr. Jaramillo stated that capacity is the governing issue, and backups are being mitigated to the best that the MDTA can manage.

Member Moran requested that restrictions and contra-flow timing be added into traveler messaging. Mr. Jaramillo stated that the MDTA opposes set times for contra-flow because it is too restrictive and carries safety implications. Implementing set contra-flow times would create targets for travelers to aim for which would add traffic volume to roadways.

Large Vehicle Restrictions

Member Moran stated that additional signage is needed to inform truckers of the vehicle restrictions on the bridge. At least 2-3 more signs should be added in advance of the bridge as vehicles can't get over to right lane when they see the last sign at the bridge. Mr. Jaramillo stated that the MDTA agrees that such vehicles should not be in canter lane and shared a slide showing the location and content of the existing vehicle restriction signs. He added that the issues are continuous and come down to education and driver behavior. The MDTA continues information work through social media, signage, and enforcement but is unable to catch all vehicles.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Foster at 7:09 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

- BBRAG Contraflow and Truck Restrictions Presentation
- Eastern Shore Ramp Management (overpasses) presentation