

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

Jack Broderick
Brad Cole
Nicholas Deoudes
Barbara Hitchings
Jim Moran
Will Pines
Sean Powell
Donald Schloss
Tracy Schulz
Steve Wilson

Staff in Attendance

Melissa Bogdan
Jim Harkness
Richard Jaramillo
Charles Kenny
James Kittleman
John Sales
Kim Millender
Mary O’Keeffe
Robert Rager

Members Not in Attendance

Hamilton Chaney
Kurt Riegel
Tim Smith

Mike Rice
Bradley Ryon
Joseph Sagal
Melissa Williams
Heather Lowe
Bradley Ryon
Andre Futrell
Jason Dicembre
TJ Bathras

Others in Attendance

Pat Lynch, Broadneck Council-(BCC), AA County Citizens' Advisory Committee - (CAC) and
Growth Action Network-(GAN).
Todd Mohn, County Administrator, Queen Anne’s County
Delegate Sid Saab, District 33
Delegate Heather Bagnall, District 33
George Harvey, QACTV

At 6:06p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order. Member Schulz welcomed Mr. Will Pines to the BBRAG. Member Pines introduced himself as the new Executive Director of the MDTA and introduced Mr. Joseph Sagal as the new Chief Operating Officer of the MDTA. Member Powell also introduced MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator for District Operations Mr. Andre Futrell who was filling in for MDOT SHA Administrator Tim Smith. Member Powell recognized Delegate Sid Saab and Delegate Heather Bagnall who both represent District 33 in attendance at the meeting. Delegate Saab stated that he appreciates the work the BBRAG does, and he wanted to get information to keep constituents informed. He added that constituents can contact him for any inquiries.

Approval – Minutes of January 5, 2022 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the January 5, 2022 meeting that were distributed to members with none being put forward.

Member Hitchings motioned to approve the minutes of the January 5 meeting with second from Member Broderick. 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 Schloss stated that the Broadneck community addresses congestion at regular meetings and that he will report back on BBRAG activities to their next meeting. Member Cole added the Broadneck Council of Communities (BCC) initiated a survey and will coordinate with MDOT SHA on the results and any recommendations that can be made.

Member Moran stated that Queen Anne's County continues to work with other eastern shore counties on Bay Bridge resolutions. At present they have resolutions from all counties but have yet to talk to Worcester, Cecil, and Carroll counties about their resolutions and are hopeful to do so soon.

Member Broderick stated that the biggest concern he's hearing from his community is where things are going from here regarding the Tier I NEPA study; adding that community members have recommended a replacement instead of a third span. Another thing that's been asked is whether MDTA is in the loop on the Ever Forward ship presently stuck in the Bay and if the incident had happened further south would it have been a concern to the MDTA. Member Pines stated that an investigation is ongoing at the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) and they have not released details. The MDTA has requested access once details are available but from what is known, the Ever Forward never presented a specific collision concern to the Bay Bridge. Member Deoudes asked if the bridge piers can withstand a ship crashing into them. Member Pines stated the bridges underwent a navigation risk assessment; adding the bridges were designed to support navigation through the channel and incorporate measures to mitigate

collisions. Member Powell added that MDOT is kept in the loop and shares access between the various divisions including MDTA. Member Broderick thanked Members Pines and Powell for the information that he can relate back to the communities.

Member Hitchings stated that she keeps the Broadneck Council of Communities (BCC) and her distribution list informed of BBRAG meetings. The previous BCC general meeting held in February was attended by MDOT SHA Administrator Tim Smith & personnel from Anne Arundel County presented proposals on alleviating congestion on the peninsula.

Member Schulz stated that the truck weigh station on westbound US 50 recently caused a backup onto the westbound span of the bridge. He thanked Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo for his prompt response to addressing the concern who added that the weigh station is now monitored for backups.

MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

Mr. Andre Futrell stated that the Stay on 50 signs will be in place prior to Memorial Day and will encourage travelers to stay on US 50 and discourage hopping off the roadway. Andre stated that starting this year an extra CHART patrol will be in place on Thursdays; monitoring from 5am to 9pm. MDOT SHA Director of Office of Transportation Mobility and Operations Jason Dicembre stated that the map of Dynamic Message Sign locations previously requested has been prepared and will be distributed to the group. Member Pines added that the map is available on the CHART website which shows actual messages in real time.

Mr. Futrell stated that some patching has been done on Whitehall Road with some more to follow. Member Cole stated his appreciation for the prompt response by MDOT SHA to fixing potholes. Member Powell added that Mr. Dicembre and MDOT SHA work closely with MDTA to coordinate on hourly reports that help deploy resources. Member Broderick added that both teams' public communication efforts are appreciated.

MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided the BBRAG a status update on the nine active projects at the Bay Bridge in the Capital Program.

Bay Bridge Capital Projects - April 2022 Update

Pin	Contract No.	Description	AD	NTP	Budget (Thousands \$)	Anticipated Completion	Percent Complete (Construction)	Design (D), Procurement (P), or Construction (C) Phase
2329	BB-2757R	Replace 5KV Feeder on EB Span & Redundant Cable	4/16/19	10/15/19	50,229	Fall 2022	74	C
2369	BB-2819	Deck Rehabilitation and Miscellaneous Modifications	3/6/19	9/9/19	33,248	Fall 2022	86	C
2412	BB-3002	Priority Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications	7/18/16	4/17/17	28,821	Summer 2022	97	C
2476	BB-3008	Bay Bridge Crossover Automated Lane Closure System	5/24/19	2/3/20	18,249	Fall 2022	70	C
2516	BB-3014	Bay Bridge Emergency All Electronic Toll (AET) Conversion	9/25/20	1/11/21	51,456	Fall 2022	65	C
2501	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	8/16/21	14,638	Summer 2024	13	C
2317	BB-2726	Rehabilitate Decks of Eastbound Span - Phase I Deck Widening and Replacement of Deck Truss Spans (Eng. Only)	9/26/19	7/12/21	12,050	Fall 2022 (CMAR) Design Phase 1	N/A	D
2470	BB-3004	Construct Project Management Office and Maintenance Equipment Storage Building	6/27/22	12/21/22	9,000	Spring 2025	N/A	D
2504	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	2,045	Spring 2023	N/A	D

Member Moran asked if the queue detection system will only tell people there is a backup. Mr. Harkness responded that it is for operational purposes and to help inform decision making.

Member Pines stated that data will help refine the accuracy of responses to presently known periods of congestion.

Member Cole asked when the barriers and protective equipment currently on US 50 would start to be removed. Mr. Harkness responded that removal is anticipated over the next two months, but that this is the project goal that is dependent on other factors. Member Pines added that until the automated lane closure gates are in operation, barrels for two-way operation will remain on the roadway. Mr. Jaramillo added they will also remain during transition. Member Schulz stated that gates look like they are placed high up. Mr. Harkness responded that the intent is to be high for visibility while travelling.

MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided a presentation with an overview of the automated lane closure gate system currently being installed at the Bay Bridge. Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness stated that there is an area of pavement removal that will contribute to a stormwater management credit but that pavement for trucks being processed at the weigh station will be retained.




Responding to a question from Member Wilson, Mr. Jaramillo responded that there are plans in place to maintain emergency vehicle access during backups.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Harkness stated that the numerous yellow lane use signals indicate drivers must merge and that drivers who travel through a red lane use signal would be in violation. Member Moran stated that it would be necessary to inform the public that they would have to merge prior to the red signal as there is a belief that merging is not necessary until physical measures force drivers to move over.

Responding to a question from Delegate Bagnall, Mr. Harkness stated that signs, markings, gate arms, etc. are all used to minimize manual labor needed for lane configuration changes. Errant drivers would hit a deployed gate arm and travel under one red lane use signal.

Unfinished Business

Community Inquiries and Requests

Status	Requests	Requestor	Outcomes
	Anemometer wind speed data	Member Moran	COMPLETE – WPL Pier 31 weather data is available at https://chart.maryland.gov/travInfo/weatherStationData.asp
	“Stay-On-50” messaging on BAYSPAN	Member Moran	PENDING – New system is still in progress in procurement but is anticipated to be in place prior to the 2022 summer season and will include ‘Stay on 50’ message.
	“Stay-On-50” signage on Route 50	Delegate Bagnall	PENDING – Signing concepts are being evaluated by MDTA and MDOT SHA.

Member Pines stated that the variable message sign location map has been provided to the group as a link (<https://chart.maryland.gov/map/default.asp>) and that MDOT SHA will follow up with a paper version.

MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator for District Operations Mr. Andre Futrell provided an update on the various requests that MDOT SHA has received. Mr. Futrell stated that they have received over 1,500 responses to a survey of Broadneck Community residents. He added that MDOT SHA will look at survey responses and at what can be done over the short, medium, and long term.

Mr. Futrell stated that a traffic signal will be installed on St. Margaret's Rd at Pleasant Plains Road with construction beginning after July 2022 with completion by Spring 2023. Mr. Futrell stated that once patching is done on College Parkway, MDOT SHA will go back and perform mill and overlay of the roadway.

Mr. Futrell stated that an additional CHART patrol will be added to Thursday and the 'Stay on US50' signage will be in place prior to Memorial Day. He also stated MDOT SHA is continually looking at MD 2 and I-97 to alleviate backups.

Member Hitchings asked about the sources and certainty of funding for a Tier II NEPA study funding. Member Pines stated that the Tier I study is close to completion and a Record of Decision. He added that the Tier I study identified a selected corridor alternative and that a Tier II study would refine the alignment and the crossing type, whether that be a new span or a replacement of the existing bridges. He stated that there are many sources of funding including transportation bills and federal funds. He added that support including from CTP priority letters, the General Assembly, etc. are important for influencing support for a Tier II study. Member Broderick stated that community members believe that the Tier I NEPA study could only determine that a third span was needed. Member Pines stated that the study only determines a two-mile-wide by 22 feet long corridor location and not the form of a new crossing. A Tier II NEPA study would determine whether new span or a replacement of the existing spans best meet the purpose and need of the study, such as minimizing environmental impacts – adding that the MDTA cannot predispose a solution. He added that community support for options that replace the existing spans would be an important component of a potential Tier II NEPA study.

Member Moran asked if ramps could be closed entirely during certain periods for safety reasons. Mr. Futrell responded that many options have been identified but they will need to be analyzed and acceptable to all stakeholders.

Responding to a question from Member Cole, Mr. Futrell responded that the survey closed on the 31st of March.

MDTA Director of Operations TJ Bathras stated that the new BaySpan system is to go into effect in May and will include a message to stay on US 50 that will be relayed at the beginning of the recording during periods of delay.

New Business

Annual Report

Member Schulz stated that a draft is being prepared and will be distributed to BBRAG members for their review once it is complete.

Authority Operations Center South Presentation

MDTA Chief Operating Officer Joey Sagal provided an overview of the Authority Operations Center South.

Responding to a question from Member Cole, Member Pines stated that wind speed velocity is a more important safety concern than wind direction and that multiple factors are involved in decision-making regarding operations at the bridge. The MDTA takes a proactive approach when adverse conditions are probable and sends out notices in advance via GovDelivery warning travelers of potential restrictions on the bridge. Local weather forecasts are monitored continually and are used in conjunction with real time data to inform decision making. Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Jaramillo stated that restrictions are the same for construction activities as they are for traffic.

MDTA Acting Deputy Director of Communications John Sales provided an overview of the MDTA's summer travel campaign stating that MDTA uses a variety of methods to alert the public about what's happening at the Bay Bridge. Messaging is focused on delays, traffic incidents, and the status of two-way operations and wind warnings/restrictions. •For 24/7 Bay Bridge traffic information call 1-877-BAYSPAN (1-877-229-7726) or visit Baybridge.com. AOC updates BAYSPAN in real-time. The public can also view traffic cameras at baybridge.com. April is Distracted Driving Month and the MDTA reminds drivers to use their devices hands free.

For real-time updates on major incidents on Maryland toll roads follow the MDTA on Twitter at twitter.com/TheMDTA. On-call Public Information Officers (PIOs) update Twitter. You can also find the MDTA on facebook.com/TheMDTA which contains major or general announcements only.

The MDTA uses the GovDelivery platform to send emails and text alerts which can be signed up for at mdta.maryland.gov or BayBridge.com. Mr. Sales added that truckers also receive alerts. GovDelivery is primarily focused on traffic delays, but also incidents, two-way operations, and wind warnings/restrictions. The service is staffed by on-call PIOs and starting in May, AOC will send alerts concerning the Bay Bridge. The MDTA increases the frequency of bulletins from Thurs-Sun between May and October.

Mr. Sales stated that the MDTA's summer travel marketing plan kicks off next month [May] and that these efforts include MDTA's spokes birds - Spike & Otis – on billboards/seaboards/busses, digital/radio/media ads & sponsorships, digital banners on web/social. The messaging will include Go Early/Stay Late, Stay on 50, and Travel off-peak. BBRAG communities are encouraged to sign up to stay informed.

Public Comments

Pat Lynch stated that there are 19,000 residents south of US 50, 48,000 residents in total on the Broadneck peninsula, and 10,000 members of the BCC which was started in 2007 for noise reasons. Ms. Lynch expressed thanks for work and appreciates the collaboration occurring in the BBRAG. She also thanked MDOT SHA Administrator Tim Smith for coming to the BCC meeting on February 24, 2022 and discussing concerns and listening to residents. The next BCC meeting on May 19 will feature Anne Arundel County Executive Mr. Stuart Pittman who will speak to members about Holly Beach farm and ferry service.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Moran at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on July 6, 2022 at 6:00p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: Automated Lane Closure Gate System presentation, Authority Operations Center South presentation.