

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

July 25, 2023
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:08 to 10:59 A.M.

MINUTES

The 355th meeting of the BRTB was called to order at 9:08 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. D'Andrea Walker.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Walker. A motion was made by Ms. Corren Johnson to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Steve Cohoon. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one who wished to address general transportation topics.

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported on the closed comment period for the draft long-range transportation plan, *Resilience 2050: Adapting to the Challenges of Tomorrow*, the short-range 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program, and the associated Air Quality Conformity Determination. During the comment period, over 4,800 people visited the project website and over 120 comments were shared, including many from individuals representing larger organizations, coalitions and other stakeholder groups. Comments reflect positive sentiment toward investments in transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and negative sentiment toward investments in roadways.

Ms. Haines Benkhedda reported that all comments were shared with BRTB members who worked with staff to respond to comments. The BRTB response to comments can be seen at publicinput.com/Resilience2050.

[Handout: Public Involvement Report for July 2023]

4&5.REPORT FROM THE JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE + INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION GROUP

Ms. Anna Marshall reported the following from the July 2023 joint TC and ICG meeting:

- The chair stated the officers for FY 2024 are MDOT as chair and Baltimore County as vice chair. He also welcomed new members to the Technical Committee, Mr. Stu Sirota for Baltimore City and Ms. Clare Stewart for Carroll County. ICG welcomed a new member as well, Ms. Sophia Cortazzo representing MDOT.
- BMC staff presented Resolution #24-1, for approval of Resilience 2050, the 2024-2027 TIP and associated air quality conformity determination. All members from both committees voted to recommend sending the resolution to the BRTB.
- BMC staff presented information on Resolution #24-2, Self-Certification, which makes sure all planning processes are being carried out by the State and MPO in accordance with all applicable requirements. The Tech Committee voted to recommend sending the resolution to the BRTB.
- Ms. Kelsey Sisko from MDE presented the 2022 Clean Air Progress Report and shared updates about regulations and policies that have helped improve Maryland's air quality, as well as ones on the horizon. In 2022, Maryland recorded the fewest number of bad ozone days ever in a year, with only three exceedance days. The Secretary of MDE said that for the first time ever, Maryland is measuring levels of air pollution that meet all ambient air quality standards. This is very exciting, especially for the Baltimore region which is currently in nonattainment for the 2015 ozone standard.
- BMC staff presented one of a series of reports from the Maryland Travel Survey, specifically about travel by paratransit in the region.

6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-1

Mr. Todd Lang introduced Resolution #24-1 regarding approval of *Resilience 2050*, the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the associated air quality conformity determination. Mr. Zach Kaufman began by presenting information on the long-range transportation plan (LRTP), *Resilience 2050: Adapting to the Challenges of Tomorrow*, focusing on key steps in the planning process, improvements to the planning process, financial trends, and the public comment period.

The planning process for *Resilience 2050* began more than two years ago. There were a number of key steps in the planning process, each of which was coordinated with the Technical Committee and BRTB, including:

- establishing goals and associated implementation strategies that form the guiding principles for *Resilience 2050*, adopted by the BRTB in November 2021;
- updating and improving the project scoring methodology, also adopted by the BRTB in November 2021;
- forecasting what our region might look like in the future through the Cooperative Forecasting Group's Round 10 socioeconomic forecasts of population, households and

employment through 2050, adopted by the BRTB in July 2022. *Resilience 2050* also includes discussion of various demographic, growth and transportation-related factors and trends in Chapters 2 and 3;

- considering the financial forecast of local, state and federal revenues anticipated to be available through 2050, adopted by the BRTB in January 2023;
- adoption of federally mandated performance targets;
- submittal of candidate projects by local jurisdictions and state agencies, scoring candidate projects and estimating costs for all candidate projects;
- coordinating with the Technical Committee and BRTB to create a draft preferred alternative of projects;
- conducting analysis of the potential effects of the draft preferred alternative, including air quality conformity, travel demand modeling, Environmental Justice analysis, identification of potential environmental mitigation strategies and identification of projects improving the Strategic Highway Network; and
- public involvement activities held throughout the planning process.

Mr. Kaufman summarized several highlights and improvements associated with the planning process for *Resilience 2050*. These include improvements to the project scoring methodology, a series of eleven white papers released in 2022 and 2023 that broke down key LRTP topics and the addition of a consistent methodology for forecasting local funding in the LRTP. Mr. Kaufman also highlighted the state and federal financial forecast for *Resilience 2050*, noting that the share of funds dedicated to system preservation has increased from 21% in the 2011 LRTP to 30% in *Resilience 2050*. The share of state and federal funds dedicated to expansion has decreased from 26% to 17% over the same time period. If this trend continues, future LRTPs will have smaller shares available for expanding the transportation network.

The final *Resilience 2050* document will include a few updates, including a full layout of Appendix C (it had previously been available in Word), addition of a table containing the full scope of policy and technical scores to Appendix B and the addition of a description of Advanced Air Mobility and electric vertical takeoff and landing air taxis per guidance by the Federal Aviation Administration for MPOs.

Mr. Kaufman concluded by noting next steps for the LRTP. After BRTB approval of *Resilience 2050*, it will be transmitted along with the 2024-2027 TIP and conformity determination to federal agencies for review and approval. Over the coming years, the BRTB needs to remain committed to the guiding principles in the plan as specific projects move towards implementation, while keeping in mind that the LRTP is a living document that should remain flexible as conditions change.

Mr. Keith Kucharek presented an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) portion of Resolution #24-1. The TIP contains 143 federally funded or regionally significant projects, 13 of which are new to the 2024-2027 TIP. There are three additional projects that were in previous TIP's but did not appear in last year's TIP. Projects in the TIP support long-range goals as outlined in *Resilience 2050*. The total funding in the 2024-2027 TIP is \$4.24 billion with \$2.89 billion being federal funding and \$1.35 billion in state and local funding.

Funding in the TIP is fairly consistent over the years. Funding over the last four years has ranged from a low of \$4.1 billion in 2022 to a high of \$4.4 billion in 2021.

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) has the largest share of funding in the TIP at just over \$1.9 billion. MDOT SHA is followed by MDOT MTA with a little over \$900 million. The Maryland Transportation Authority, which uses exclusively toll revenues funds about \$636 million, followed by \$451 million for locally sponsored projects and \$250 million for Port related projects, most of which is the Howard Street Tunnel.

There are nine funding categories in the TIP. Highway Preservation accounts for nearly 42% of all spending in the TIP. Highway Capacity and Transit Preservation are next at 22% and 19% respectively. Smaller amounts for Ports, Emission Reduction Strategies and Commuter Rail Preservation account for the remaining funds.

MDOT MTA utilizes the public participation process used for the TIP to meet the Federal Transit Administration's public participation requirements. Therefore, the TIP document provides a breakdown of MDOT MTA Funding by category. Section 5307C, which is used for bus purchases, bus replacements and preventive maintenance accounts for about \$397 million. Section 5337 and CMAQ funds follow with \$284 million and \$182 million respectively.

The TIP tracks 25 federally required performance measures as was laid out in the MAP-21 Legislation and has continued with the FAST Act and IIJA. Performance Measures are tracked for Transit Asset Management, Transit Safety, Highway Safety, Traffic Congestion and others to help improve methods to connect TIP investments with their impact on performance measures and targets.

Mr. Kucharek highlighted several major projects in the 2024-2027 TIP.

- The Multimodal Transportation Center in Parole in Anne Arundel County, a \$17 million project that is expected to be complete in 2026.
- The West North Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvement project in Baltimore City programs \$11 million for ADA upgrades, pedestrian signals, lighting and drainage.
- Howard County is programming funds for the Patapsco Regional Greenway: Elkridge to Guinness Open Gate Brewery that will construct a 1.5 mile trail as part of the overall 40 mile Greenway.
- MDOT SHA has programmed \$149 million for the I-795 Dolfield Boulevard Interchange which also includes widening of I-795 from Owings Mills Boulevard to Franklin Boulevard.
- MDOT MPA has included the Masonville Cove Connector Shared Use Path in the 2024-2027 TIP which will provide access to the Masonville Cove Refuge area and connect over 20 miles of existing and planned trails.
- In Carroll and Harford Counties, 18 bridge repair or replacements will improve safety and extend the life of those structures.

Ms. Marshall gave an overview of the air quality conformity determination process. The purpose of the air quality analysis is to ensure the LRTP and TIP do not worsen air quality in

the region or delay the attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) as set by EPA. It is required that estimated emissions from the proposed projects as a whole do not exceed the motor vehicle emissions budgets in the state air quality implementation plan, or SIP.

Currently the Baltimore region is in nonattainment for the 2015 ozone standards. As a result, in the regional emissions analysis of the precursors of ozone, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were modeled for on-road vehicles including cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, and idling trucks. Five horizon years, 2023, 2025, 2035, 2045 and 2050, were modeled with the existing transportation network and proposed TIP and plan projects. For both pollutants in all analyzed years, emissions estimates measured well below the SIP budgets.

Finally, Ms. Marshall shared a slide showing a summary of the conformity analysis process in coordination with reviewing agencies. Coordination with ICG and MDE confirmed the methodology and conformity exemption status of each project. BMC and MDE independently ran the modeling analysis, and both came up with the same results, leading ICG to approve the regional emissions analysis results for public review. ICG and the Technical Committee voted to recommend approval of the conformity document on July 5th.

Mr. Kaufman concluded the presentation by summarizing the public comment period for the three documents, held from May 17 – June 20. The comment period included promotion across 13 print, radio and digital outlets, with a potential reach of 1 million impressions through paid promotion. The comment period also included additional impressions through BMC and BRTB member jurisdiction social media accounts as well as earned media in WBAL, WYPR, Maryland Matters and other outlets.

BMC staff created an online project hub on the PublicInput platform that included document summaries, the eleven white papers, a pre-recorded presentation, a story map, interactive mapping, full draft documents and information on submitting comments. Meetings for the public comment period included one virtual and seven in-person public meetings.

The BRTB received more than 100 comments from 173 participants via email and the PublicInput platform. All comments were distributed to the Technical Committee, the BRTB, the Interagency Consultation Group, and BMC staff. BMC staff collaborated with local jurisdiction and state agency staff to review and respond to each individual comment. Main themes from the comments include negative sentiment towards the scale of roadway expansion in the preferred alternative, both in terms of the number of projects and the amount of expenditures. Many comments also reflect concerns with the implications of roadway expansion for climate change, land use and sprawl, air quality and public health. The comments also reflect positive sentiment towards more transit expansion, increased transit reliability and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Mr. Kaufman thanked those that took the time to review the documents and to comment. Comments showed deep engagement with the documents, which was great to see and reflects the purpose of public involvement. Likewise, Mr. Kaufman thanked BMC staff and committee members for engaging with every comment and responding thoughtfully. All

comments and responses are posted online at www.resilience2050.com and will be included in the appendices for the three documents.

Ms. Walker asked for a motion on Resolution #24-1. Ms. Heather Murphy recommended approval of the resolution, and Mr. Alex Rawls seconded the motion. Ms. Walker asked BRTB members if they had any questions or comments. Ms. Walker and Mr. Bruce Gartner voiced their support for the improvements to the project scoring methodology, noting the additional transit criteria and doubling the points allocated to safety as highlights. Ms. Bihui Xu complemented the series of white papers released on LRTP topics while *Resilience 2050* was in development.

Ms. Walker asked if any members of the public had any comments on Resolution #24-1. Several members of the public commented on the resolution. Their comments reflected the main themes from the public comment period, namely negative sentiment towards roadway expansion and positive sentiment towards transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments. Comments are summarized briefly below:

- Mr. Joshua Spokes, Strong Towns Baltimore, said that investing in highway expansion will unsustainably increase system preservation and operating needs at the expense of future major capital expansion. Mr. Spokes noted that Baltimore has fallen behind other cities in transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and recommended spending disproportionately higher on those categories in an effort to catch up. Mr. Spokes closed by encouraging the BRTB to table the resolution and reallocate funding away from highway expansion and towards transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects.
- Mr. Michael Scepaniak, Strong Towns Baltimore, noted the opposition to roadway expansion and support for transit expansion in the comments. Mr. Scepaniak said that the transit/roadway split in the LRTP is inadequate given the lack of transit capacity expansion over the last 20 years. Mr. Scepaniak encouraged the BRTB to consider an LRTP that reduces vehicle miles traveled and increases non-automobile mode share by reducing roadway expenditures and increasing the share dedicated to transit and active transportation projects, as encouraged in the public comments.
- Mr. Jed Weeks, Bikemore, said that his organization provided written comments that the BRTB has ignored and that he has seen a pattern of ignored comments during his time on the former Public Advisory Committee. Mr. Weeks said that the LRTP and TIP continue the status quo of sprawl-inducing highway widening at the expense of transit and are in opposition to the sentiments of public comment and the Mayor's Climate Action Plan.
- Mr. Tyler Crowe indicated that much of his experience using mass transit in Baltimore has been positive, but feels that the plans do not fairly address public transit. He encouraged the BRTB to evaluate automobile and transit with equal travel times of 30 minutes rather than analyzing a longer travel time of 60 minutes for transit. Despite claims the plan encourages sustainability, equity and economic growth, transit times will remain two to four times higher than automobile travel times. Mr. Crowe said that the Baltimore region could capitalize on its strengths to attract innovative businesses and talent to the region by encouraging multimodal transportation, but doesn't think that *Resilience 2050* reflects that vision.

- Mr. James Pizzurro summarized the comments, noting that they are consistently pro-bike, pro-transit and anti-roads. Despite public sentiment, the plans are consistently pro-roads and disproportionately spend more on highways than any other mode. He encouraged the BRTB to recognize and consider the role of induced demand in highway expansion, noting that he does not think that highway expansion will improve air quality, congestion or traffic outcomes. Mr. Pizzurro said that the region should move more quickly to prioritize transit infrastructure in light of the comments received. He encouraged the BRTB to consider an additional funding allocation for complete streets projects in the LRTP.
- Mr. Eyob Worku noted that he took transit to the meeting despite the long travel time, highlighting the inadequate frequency of bus service for his trip. There is a large difference between a wait of 10 minutes, which reflects a reliable system, and 40 minutes, which is something that people will only use if they have no choice. Bus frequency is particularly important for transit reliant populations. Mr. Worku closed by encouraging the BRTB to consider trolley buses, given their competitive performance and cost as compared to battery electric buses.
- Mr. Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance (CMTA), noted that prior comment from CMTA has not changed the priorities reflected in the TIP and LRTP, asking what the board needs to hear to change plans to prioritize transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure over roadways. Mr. Norton encouraged the BRTB to embrace a positive vision for the future where disproportionate investments in transit create walkable, livable, human-scale streets. Mr. Norton said that due to years of inadequate transit capacity expenditures, balanced spending today on roadways and transit will not be enough if Baltimore wants to catch up to other regions.
- Mr. David House said that he chose to drive to the meeting since the travel time would be 12 minutes versus an hour on transit. As a city resident, he thinks that transit travel times are a travesty and that we need to invest in transit instead of roadway expansion.
- Mr. Chris Guinnup noted that riding transit can be a great experience that we can have in the Baltimore region if we choose to invest in it. He said that Baltimore City is losing population due in part to mobility and accessibility challenges and believes this trend will continue if we prioritize cars over people who live in Baltimore city neighborhoods. He expressed disappointment in statistics indicating that unreliable bus travel times are the primary reason Baltimore City students are late to school. Mr. Guinnup urged the BRTB to table their vote and to reallocate funds towards transit and active transportation.
- Mr. Will Fedder expressed disappointment in transit reliability in the region. Similar to other comments, he encouraged a reallocation of funding away from highway expenditures and towards transit and active transportation. Mr. Fedder also proposed reducing the weighting given to mobility in the technical project scoring criteria.
- Ms. Anna Ellis did not speak but communicated her support for prior comments.

Mr. Lang thanked members of the public who reviewed and commented on the documents. He noted that the LRTP is a living document that can be amended to include additional transit and active transportation projects as they enter the planning pipeline. He also emphasized the importance of getting the LRTP into place so that major projects can begin to move forward.

Mr. Lang said that the BRTB hears and understands the frustration with the pace of transit and active transportation improvements, but that *Resilience 2050* represents a step in the right direction. It dedicates twice as much to transit expansion as the previous plan, much of which goes towards new projects including the Red Line, the north-south transit corridor and 17 transit hubs. *Resilience 2050* also includes extensive investments in system preservation including the zero-emission bus transition, replacement of light rail vehicles, the Hanover Street Bridge, several complete streets roadway projects as well as additional funds in the amount of \$280 million set aside for projects and programs improving air quality in the region.

Mr. Lang asked the BRTB to consider Resolution #24-1 adopting *Resilience 2050*, the 2024-2027 TIP and the associated air quality conformity determination. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution. During voting, Mr. Sam Snead thanked staff and members of the public for their substantive comments. Mr. Bruce Gartner also thanked members of the public and said that Howard County is trying to build momentum for transit and that their voices will be useful in advocating for transit in the future. Mr. Gartner said that the comments this time are not in vain – they help set us up for continued discussions, citing recent legislation, the newly created Baltimore Regional Transit Commission and the new administration in Annapolis. Ms. Murphy also thanked members of the public and said that it takes time to develop new active transportation, complete streets and transit projects. There is a new Secretary at MDOT and a new administration in Annapolis and the upcoming draft CTP (scheduled for release September 1, 2023) will look different from the CTP approved in the last legislative session.

[PowerPoint: Resilience 2050, 2024-2027 TIP and the Conformity Determination]

7. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-2

Mr. Lang presented information on the requirements the BRTB must follow in conducting regional transportation planning and in preparing plans and programs.

The Metropolitan Planning Rule directs all Transportation Management Areas to certify that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out by the State and the MPO in accordance with all applicable requirements. Applicable requirements include the Metropolitan Planning Regulations, the Clean Air Act as it relates to air quality conformity, nondiscrimination requirements, involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises, and equal opportunity employment. Self-certification occurs each year concurrent with the submittal of the proposed Transportation Improvement Program to federal agencies.

Ms. Aris also noted that the self-certification has been updated to reflect activities undertaken during the past year including a reference to the first year of the Transportation CORE, activities approved as part of *Resilience 2050*, a series of performance measures approved, approval of the Limited English Proficiency Plan and approval of the Public Participation Plan.

Mr. Bruce Gartner recommended approval of the resolution, and Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. Walker asked if members of the public had any comments, several people offered testimony.

Mr. Scepaniak appreciates steps of late such as the introduction of Public Input as an engagement tool and the Transportation CORE, also his suggested updates to PPP were incorporated. On the surface this seems good. However, the comments on Resilience 2050 resulted in no changes to the project mix and the BRTB still pursued a straight vote to approve. It is possible for a Plan to be delayed, but no one chose to hold off. This does not appear that the BRTB seriously considered input. No changes means the BRTB is not meeting self-certification's intent.

Mr. Weeks of Bikemore expressed frustration with disregard to public comment. He believes that self-certification without an adjustment to Resilience 2050 should be deferred for explicit consideration of public comments.

The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: Self-Certification]

8. PRESENTATION: HOWARD COUNTY NAMED AMERICA'S BEST FOR COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES OF 2023

Mr. Chris Eatough provided the story behind Howard County's award as the number one Complete Streets (CS) Policy of 2023 by Smart Growth America. This work has been ongoing for some years starting with the 2016 adoption of the Bike Master Plan.

Mr. Eatough described the scoring criteria and said that Howard County was awarded 100 of 100 points, the first perfect score ever awarded. The elements making up the score include: 1) established commitment and vision (12 points), 2) prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities (9 points), 3) applies to all projects and phases (10 points), 4) allows only clear exceptions (8 points), 5) mandates coordination (8 points), 6) adopts excellent design guidance (7 points), 7) requires proactive land use planning (10 points), 8) measures progress (13 points), 9) sets criteria for choosing projects (8 points), and 10) creates a plan for implementation (15 points).

In order to achieve the end result, the process included 37 meetings and addressing 981 public comments. As a result of the Policy, in-person training was provided to County staff as well as developers and their engineers. Those materials are now online to support ongoing training. Also to support this work, a multimodal transportation study with an online guide was developed, a street type selection guide provides supplemental support, and in development is a pedestrian maintenance of traffic field guide to maintain safe work zones for pedestrians and cyclists. A next step is updating the Land Development Regulations to include the CS Policy.

Mr. Eatough left the group with several critical lessons learned: 1) community involvement is essential, 2) gather input from diverse groups, 3) study best practices and evolving design options, and 4) don't rush the process. This process needs to lead to a mindset that is likely a culture change, but it can happen.

Ms. Walker asked about the role of developers since Baltimore County is starting a CS Policy. In response, it was stated that a representative of developers should be on the team and they should coordinate with local development organizations. Mr. Rawls asked about adherence to the CS Policy. The Howard County process included a well defined process for exceptions to Policy. Also, more work will be done during development of the Land Development Regulations. Members applauded Howard County on this impressive accomplishment.

[PowerPoint: Complete Streets in Howard County]

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Walker reminded members that the next BRTB will be held virtually on August 22, 2023. There was no other business

Members

Jasmine Champion, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne’s County Department of Public Works
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Eric Leshinsky, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Corren Johnson, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Fred Lippert (for Liz Gordon), MDOT Maryland Transit Administration
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Sam Snead – Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation
D’Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Charles Baber, BMC
Zac Blanchard, guest
Cindy Burch, BMC
David Cookson, Howard County
Tyler Crowe, guest
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Chris Eatough – Howard County
Anna Ellis, guest
Will Fedder, Strong Towns Baltimore
Chris Guinnup, guest
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC

Victor Henry, BMC
David House, Strong Towns Baltimore
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Shawn Kimberly, BMC
Jim Knighton, MDOT MTA
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Anna Marshall, BMC
Charlene Mingus, BMC
Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
James Pizzurro, guest
Brandy Savarese, guest
Michael Scepaniak, Strong Towns Baltimore
Phil Scherer, Strong Towns Baltimore
Patrick Smith
Nick Snider, guest
Josh Spokes, guest
Jed Weeks, Bikemore
Eyob Worku, guest
Daniel Zawodny, the Baltimore Banner

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board