

## BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

November 28, 2023  
Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
9:02 to 10:06 A.M.

### MINUTES

The 359<sup>th</sup> meeting was called to order at 9:02 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. D'Andrea Walker.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a request for a motion to approve the minutes of the September and October BRTB meetings. A motion was made by Mr. Bruce Gartner. to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Steve Cohoon. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one who wished to address the BRTB.

#### 3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported on the following public engagement activities:

- Comments are welcome on a proposed 5.5 mile trail segment of the PRG from Guinness Open Gate Brewery to the Southwest Area Park in Baltimore County. Comments are welcome through December 5 via text, voicemail, on the project webpage, and the survey and interactive map on the project StoryMap. Visit [publicinput.com/PRG](https://publicinput.com/PRG) to learn more or participate.
- Upcoming UPWP activities that will be seeking public engagement in FY 2024 include: the Vision for a Regional Bicycle Network, PRG: Stoney Run segment, a review of transportation Fares, Fees and Fines, and several more. Additionally there will be a comment period for a spring federal certification review of the Baltimore region transportation planning process.
- The Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) is seeking public input on the development of goals for the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) service. Public

feedback will help shape the future of MARC train service including potential extensions to Delaware, Virginia and West Virginia. Take the [survey today](#).

- BMC publishes a monthly newsletter called Bmore Involved, which features articles about how the public can be engaged at the regional, state and local level. Ms. Haines Benkhedda asked BRTB members to share upcoming public meetings and engagement opportunities with her to include in future issues of the e-newsletter. To sign up to receive the Bmore Involved e-newsletter, visit [publicinput.com/Portal/J5348](http://publicinput.com/Portal/J5348).

### ***[Handout: Public Involvement Report for November 2023]***

## **4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Mr. Dan Janousek reported the following on the November Technical Committee meeting:

- Baltimore City presented the three new projects that are coming before the BRTB today. The SE Baltimore Freight Corridor, the Wilkens Avenue Bridge over Gwynns Falls, and the Baltimore City Greenway Trail: Eastern Segment. After the presentation, the TC voted to send the resolution to the BRTB.

- MDOT SHA presented an update on Critical Urban and Critical Rural Freight Corridor mileage designation. The National Highway Freight Network allows for allocating federal funds and policies towards highway segments that are crucial to freight movement. The Baltimore region currently has 25 CUFC miles and 8 CRFC miles. The IJA increased the state's caps to 150 CUFC miles and 300 CRFC miles, allowing the Baltimore region's share of CUFCs to increase to 50 miles. MDOT SHA has provided sufficient information for staff and the TC to determine which segments to recommend to the BRTB for the additional 25 miles.

- Report on status of Transportation and Land Use Connection Grants - BMC discussed the original two awards which were to: 1) Baltimore City for Wabash Avenue and 2) Annapolis for Bay Ridge Avenue.

BMC then presented on Round II of the Transportation and Land Use Connection (TLC) Competitive Grant Program. The TLC program supports local governments in their planning and preliminary design efforts and provides short-term technical assistance for regional land-use/transportation priorities at the community level. All local jurisdictions that are voting members of the BRTB are eligible to apply. Inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional partnerships are encouraged. Applications must provide documentation of local support and must include features of locally approved plans.

- FY 2025 UPWP Discussion - BMC staff reviewed the schedule for the FY 2025 UPWP Addendum. A key date is agreement on topics by the end of 2023 and a budget by mid-January. A draft Addendum will be shared with the TC on February 7 with a request to release for a 30-day comment period.

The TC reviewed eight new topics for consideration and identified 3 topics that would repeat in FY 2025. Several key points were covered for each area. Following the meeting, members received a survey to prioritize the topics that are of most interest to them.

- BMC staff provided an overview of the proposed Microtransit RFP. This task is in direct support of the Baltimore region LOTS as well as MDOT MTA. Microtransit services are shared transportation services that sit between traditional fixed-route transit and ride-hailing services. The TC heard about the scope and deliverables and then approved the task to move forward.

## **5. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-7**

Ms. Regina Aris introduced Resolution #24-7. Baltimore City has requested to amend the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add three new projects. The SE Baltimore freight corridor, the Wilkens Avenue Bridge over Gwynns Falls and the Baltimore City Greenway Trail: Eastern Segment. All three of these projects were shared with the Interagency Consultation Group and all three were determined to be exempt according to the conformity rule. Mr. Scott Weaver presented the Colgate Creek Bridge project and the Wilkens Avenue Bridge project. Mr. Nick Chupein presented the Baltimore Greenway project.

Mr. Weaver detailed the history of the Colgate Creek Bridge. The structure is 50 years old and is listed in poor condition with an efficiency rating of 43.5. Emergency repairs were completed in 2014.

TIGER grant funding was secured to complete design and construction which began in 2017. Changes in the bridge design have resulted in an increase in costs. The tiger grant funding has expired and was not enough to cover the cost increases. Therefore additional funding of \$2.5 million is needed to complete construction. This amendment adds the \$2.5 million in FY 2024. Construction is anticipated to be completed in fall of 2025.

Mr. Weaver also presented the Wilkens Avenue Bridge over Gwynns Falls project. This bridge is also rated as poor with a sufficiency rating of 39.8. The city received a letter of concern from the inspection consultant about the condition of the bridge.

This project was advertised for construction in December 2022 but the lowest bid was 31% higher than the engineers estimate causing the city to re-advertise with updated costs. This amendment will add \$3.8 million in construction costs in FY 2024 as a result of cost increases. The anticipated completion is in 2025.

Mr. Chupein presented the Baltimore City Greenway Trail: Eastern Segment. This amendment adds \$4.0 million in right-of-way funds obtained from a combination of a \$2.5 million federal earmark and \$1.5 million state capital grant. The city has been coordinating with Norfolk Southern Corp. to purchase property for the proposed trail.

The eastern segment of the trail is approximately 1.9 miles long, running from O'Donnell Street to Federal Street. The trail will benefit Baltimore and the surrounding communities by promoting social equity, improving health, creating safe active transportation connections, protecting the environment and creating economic development.

The tentative timeline includes completion of NEPA in spring of 2024, property acquisition in summer of 2024, 30% design completion in winter 2024, community engagement and design completion in spring 2025 with construction scheduled for FY 2025-2026.

Ms. Walker asked for a motion and a second regarding Resolution #24-7. Mr. Sam Snead offered the motion on Resolution #24-7 and Mr. Christopher Jakubiak seconded the motion. Mr. Gartner asked about what happened to the TIGER grant and Mr. Weaver provided a response. A vote was taken on Resolution #24-7, with unanimous support from the members.

***[PowerPoint: Baltimore City TIP Amendments]***

**6. UPDATE ON SEVERAL UPCOMING UPWP PROJECTS**

Mr. Lang introduced the three topics and project managers.

- **Post-pandemic Trends in Employment, Commercial Real Estate, Housing Location Choice, and Travel Demand** – Mr. Shawn Kimberly provided an overview of the above named task. He explained that the pandemic caused, or accelerated, major changes to how and where people work, with substantial effects upon workers, employment centers and travel patterns. The purpose of the project is to identify and quantify these changes, and to project and explain their potential longer-term implications – thereby informing land-use assumptions for future forecast rounds and travel demand modeling efforts. The project includes several tasks in three phases. The first phase of the project is comprised of employee and employer surveys regarding flexible work arrangements, office space utilization and shifts in travel patterns. The second phase builds upon the findings of the first, and will quantify work-from-home adoption rates across the region, provide a range of regional forecasts and an analysis of post-pandemic employment by industry, analyze recent changes in commercial real estate and the potential impacts upon downtowns, and explore how work-from-home adoption may influence home location choice. For the third phase, the consultant will develop a cohesive and comprehensive final report and present the results to the BRTB, Technical Committee and Cooperative Forecasting Group. The report will tie together the written reports from Phase 1 and Phase 2, and describe the findings, implications and recommendations.

The firm selected to lead the project is AECOM Technical Services, with WBA Research (a Maryland based DBE firm) serving as a subcontractor. The project kickoff meeting was held on November 14. The project schedule calls for Phase 1 to be complete in May 2024, with Phase 2 beginning in April and ending in October, and the Phase 3 final report and presentations are expected to be delivered by the end of calendar year 2024.

When asked about the timeline of the regional forecasts to be produced by the consultant, Mr. Kimberly explained that the horizon year will be 2055 so that they can be referenced in support of the next set of cooperative forecasts. Responding to a question regarding transit ridership, Mr. Kimberly explained that while the project will address trends in ridership and the changes since the pandemic began, it is not expected to parse out the proportion of change attributable to adjustments resulting from the pandemic vs other causes. When

asked about the relocation of thousands of jobs from the offices at State Center to downtown Baltimore, Mr. Kimberly agreed that the move will have a significant impact upon commercial real estate in the area, and will be included in the analyses of the project.

- **Evaluation of Fares, Fees and Fines for Undue Burdens** - Mr. Don Halligan presented on the UPWP task. He informed the Board that, on behalf of the BRTB, the BMC sought proposals from qualified respondents with experience working with state and local jurisdictions to assess the impact of transportation fees, fines and fares on low-income individuals and vulnerable populations in the Baltimore region.

He said the project will assess the impacts of fees, fines and fares on low-income individuals and vulnerable populations in the region, summarize the transportation revenue sources in the region and how they are distributed within the transportation system and the extent to which fines, fees and fares examined contribute. He stated that the study will also identify and evaluate strategies that could alleviate the disproportionate financial burden on lower-income individuals from these costs and allow for a better understanding of the tradeoffs between affordability strategies and ensuring the transportation system generates sufficient revenue, including from its users to sufficiently meet the needs of system operators and owners. Lastly, it will recommend policy changes to reduce inequitable financial impacts experienced by vulnerable populations in the region from the fines, fees and fares examined. Mr. Halligan also asked members from local jurisdictions to participate on the steering committee.

- **Vision for a Regional Bicycle Network** - Ms. Charlene Mingus shared information about the project, which begins in early December 2023 and is expected to conclude 18 months from the start of work. The focus of the project is to develop a vision for a network of bicycle and shared-use facilities that improve regional connectivity, safety and mobility by increasing access to jobs and other daily activities and providing transportation and recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Alta Planning + Design was selected by the proposal review team to be the consultant for the project. The team will collaborate with the project Steering and Advisory committees and the public to develop a vision, goals, objectives, and criteria to identify the regional bicycle network. The project team will also analyze current conditions, identify the regional network and develop a network implementation strategy including short, medium and long-term projects. The project team will develop a well-organized and visually compelling final plan, which will include the previously mentioned tasks, as well as network implementation cost estimates, implementation strategies and recommendations, benefit analysis, and identification of performance measures. The project will be grounded in public input from a diverse mix of stakeholders through an online project page with interactive maps, in-person and online surveys, ten in-person public meetings paired with a virtual meeting, and a public forum held in-person and virtually. The project team will also develop a “public meeting in a box” which can be used by local jurisdictions and partners to solicit additional feedback so that input and participation will be received from all corners of the Baltimore region.

***[PowerPoint: Three Upcoming Consultant Tasks in the FY 2024 UPWP]***

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Lang, on behalf of the BRTB, had two items for MDOT.

1) At the October BRTB meeting, Secretary Wiedefeld indicated that BRTB members would get a chance to review and discuss the revised fiscally constrained CTP prior to it being submitted to the general assembly. Can you give us an update to the timing of the release and how MDOT plans to engage with the members on the revisions? Ms. Heather Murphy indicated that MDOT has not finalized when and how, but is in the process of thinking through how to get out a potential solution. The solution will not be easy. There are a lot of moving parts but we do plan on coming out with something for people to react to. The CTP will be part of the Governor's budget which is due to the General Assembly by January seventeenth.

2) A recent report to the General Assembly indicated that in fiscal year 2021 \$110 million of STBG flex funding was transferred to MDOT MTA for the Purple Line project. In addition, the FY 2024-2029 draft CTP also plans for \$150 million in STBG and/or NHPP funds to be transferred from FHWA to FTA for various MDOT MTA projects, along with the annual \$44.8 million CMAQ transfer. Can the BRTB get documentation of these transfers and any future transfers including documentation that the urban sub-allocation is being followed? Ms. Murphy said that could certainly share anything that impacts the Baltimore region.

The meeting ended at 10:06 am.

### ***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  
Elizabeth Gordon, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration  
Christopher Jakubiak, Annapolis Department of Planning  
Corren Johnson, Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
Mary Lane, Carroll County Department of Planning  
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)  
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning  
Jason Quan, RTA of Central Maryland  
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)  
Cindy Burch, BMC  
Tyson Byrne, MDOT

Nick Chupein, Baltimore City Department of Planning (DOP)  
Rebecca Deibel, BMC  
Makayla Fulmore, guest  
Louisa Glazunova, BMC  
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC  
Don Halligan, BMC  
Jordan Hendry, guest  
Victor Henry, BMC  
Dan Janousek, MDOT  
Khari Karade, Morgan State University  
Zach Kaufman, BMC  
Shawn Kimberly, BMC  
Todd Lang, BMC  
Kyle Legg, Baltimore City DOP  
Michael, guest  
Sheila Mahoney, BMC  
Anna Marshall, BMC  
Charlene Mingus, BMC  
Miranda Nthala, guest  
Andrea Sherman, HDR  
Eileen Singleton, BMC  
Jacob Took, BMC  
Scott Weaver, Baltimore City DOT

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board