

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

Impact Hub

5:35 to 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Eric Norton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M.

1. UPDATE ON PAC RETREAT

Mr. Eric Norton reported that he presented an update to the BRTB at their August meeting on the role of the PAC in the BRTB's planning process and how the members can be more effective and serve as a more valuable public involvement resource for the BRTB:

- Mr. Norton shared what people liked about the PAC: The diversity of backgrounds and experiences of members; the exchange of ideas; and the presentations and knowledge sharing on transportation plans and projects.
- He also shared frustrations among PAC members that their individual talents and group wisdom weren't being utilized by the BRTB, with 62% of current and 78% of former members who felt their service on the PAC had little to no impact. He also explained that members also discussed a disconnect in what the PAC is asked to do in terms of providing input into a process where decision-making on transportation projects happens primarily at the state and local levels in Maryland, not at the BRTB.
- Mr. Norton acknowledged that the PAC doesn't need to exist – it is a tool the BRTB has established in an effort to get public input and feedback from a diverse representation of members from around the region. Given this, he asked the BRTB, "Is the PAC useful and valuable to you? Are we giving you the kind of input you're looking for? Are there other tools and strategies for gathering public input that could be more useful than the PAC?"

Mr. Norton reported that BRTB members thanked him for bringing these concerns to light and shared some of their immediate thoughts and ideas, which included:

- Explore the option of having a PAC seat at the Technical Committee where more robust discussion happens in advance of a vote by the BRTB. This would require moving the PAC meeting to a new monthly date and time in order to have time for the PAC to review information and develop recommendations prior to the Technical Committee meetings. Staff will work with the PAC Chairs to identify possibilities for a new meeting schedule and a seat at the table for the PAC at the Technical Committee meetings.

- BRTB members will look at options for attending PAC meetings so that various BRTB members can hear directly from the PAC and have a chance to dialogue, ask questions, share information, offer feedback, etc. This would also fulfill the statement in the PAC Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3: "The BRTB shall provide a non-voting liaison to the PAC."
- The PAC would like to gain greater clarification from the BRTB as to what they would like to see from the PAC and what would be valuable to the BRTB. In addition to BRTB members attending the PAC meetings, an idea was raised to host meet and greets with the BRTB members, local planning staff, and PAC members.
- A recommendation was made for staff to put together a report about the PAC's concerns and an evaluation of the current process, information on what other MPOs are doing, and recommendations and a work plan moving forward to address concerns and incorporate recommended changes.

Staff will continue to work with the PAC and BRTB leadership teams on these items and continued efforts to improve the function of the PAC and its relationship with the BRTB.

2. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL REGIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS FOR FY2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Mr. Todd Lang presented a list of potential topics being considered for inclusion in the FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This initial list of was generated by the Technical Committee as a starting point and discussions on these topics will continue over the next few months, with selected topics included in a draft UPWP for public comment in February 2020.

PAC members asked questions and offered feedback on existing ideas. They then went on to brainstorm the following ideas:

- designate additional staff and resources for Every Voice Counts;
- create an updated affordable housing plan which looks at the link between transportation and housing;
- look at traffic operations impacts (or lack thereof) of bus lanes and bike lanes;
- examine the safety of various bike lane designs and ways to increase visibility of signage and safety for cyclists;
- transportation for people with disabilities;
- develop an equity framework;
- explore options for creating a regional transportation authority or other ways to institutionalize cooperative regionalism and planning beyond political boundaries; and
- review previous UPWP studies to asses usefulness/applicability.

PAC members asked how UPWP studies are selected and discussed the importance of selecting projects which relate to regional goals of the long-range transportation plan and the Public Participation Plan.

The PAC agreed to continue to discuss ideas via subcommittees in September with further discussion at the October PAC meeting. Specifically, the PAC will look at:

- previous PAC recommendations and opportunities for inclusion in the next UPWP;

- discuss how these studies fit into bigger picture concepts of regionalism and equity and public involvement and if there is a scoring mechanism to evaluate UPWP project ideas based on these frameworks.

[PowerPoint: FY 2021 UPWP Potential Project Ideas]

3. OTHER BUSINESS

The following announcements were made:

- BMC has issued an [RFP for a consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of current public involvement activities](#) of the BRTB and to develop recommendations for improving public involvement in the region's transportation planning process.
- The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) will host a series of [meetings on the draft Consolidated Transportation Program](#) (CTP).
- The MDOT MTA's [Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan Commission meeting](#) will be held Friday, September 20 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Howard County Miller Library (9421 Frederick Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042).
- Get Maryland Moving is hosting a [webinar](#) on Thursday, September 12 at 7:30 p.m. to give an update on what the RTP is and how residents can get involved in its development.
- MDTA is hosting a series of six [Open Houses on the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study](#): Tier 1 NEPA (Bay Crossing Study) from September 24 through October 9.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Michael Davis – Resident, Carroll County

(by phone)

Janet Eveland – Resident, Baltimore City

Mark Lotz – Resident, Harford County

Eric Norton – Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Arthur Petersen – Resident, Baltimore City

Sharon Smith – Partners In Care

Arjan van Andel – Resident, Anne Arundel County

Paul Verchinski – Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA)

Jennifer Weeks – Resident, Baltimore City

(by phone)

Daniel Yi – Resident, Howard County

Staff and Guests

Monica Haines Benkhedda – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)

Todd Lang – BMC

Ramond Robinson – Anne Arundel County