

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

January 5, 2016

Baltimore Metropolitan Council

9:30 to 11:52 A.M.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M. by Chair, Mr. Scott Graf.

1. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 5, 2015 MINUTES

Mr. Graf asked for approval of the minutes from the December meeting of the Technical Committee. Ms. Valorie LaCour moved to approve the minutes with Ms. Martha Arzu McIntosh seconding the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. BALTIMORELINK TRANSIT PLAN

Mr. Kevin Quinn, Director of Planning and Capital Programming at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), provided TC members with details about BaltimoreLINK, a \$135 million, proactive investment in transit, announced by Governor Larry Hogan in 2015. The multi-phase plan seeks to create an interconnected, customer-focused transit system that is safer and cleaner by redesigning the entire local and express bus systems throughout Baltimore and creating new high-frequency, color-coded bus routes that improve connections to jobs and seamlessly and also connect to Light Rail, Metro, MARC, Commuter Bus, and other services.

The bus system would be split into three elements: 1) CityLINK: high-quality, high-frequency service that allows riders to reach all stops on the CityLink, Metro, and Light Rail systems with only one-transfer; 2) LocalLINK: to fill in gaps and provide connections to all modes; and 3) Express BusLINK for longer-distance, commuter-oriented trips.

In developing BaltimoreLINK, MTA considered stakeholder comments submitted through the Bus Network Improvement Project (BNIP) as well as input received through meetings with elected officials, city leaders, residents, and a series of other stakeholder meetings in the summer and fall of 2015. Lessons learned from this feedback is that the existing transit system in Baltimore is not a unified / interconnected system, it is crowded and unclean, it is unreliable, and it does not connect to today's job markets.

Key elements of the plan include:

- Improved maps and signage, including new, color-coded routing and bus wraps;

- Funding (in partnership with Baltimore City) for construction of east-west and north-south dedicated bus lanes;
- Transit Signal Priority (TSP) installed citywide to increase speed and reliability;
- Multi-modal transit hubs with improvements such as transfer pathways and wayfinding, bus bays, new shelters, and improved pedestrian/bike access (MTA plans to partner with Charm City Bikeshare);
- Enhanced safety via 10 new MTA police officers, safety alerts at 16 intersections in the Central Business District to alert patrons when light rail trains are approaching, and new clean initiatives;
- Operating funds (\$3 M) for the Charm City Circulator, which MTA sees as a complementary service and \$500,000 to support the City bikeshare rollout;
- Enhanced service for West Baltimore residents via the QuickBus 40;
- Private-sector transportation solutions such as car-sharing and innovative “Pop-Up” transit services to supplement existing service and reduce overcrowding;
- Improved bike facilities at all MTA rail stations; and
- Last mile investments.

Another element of the plan is to improve access to jobs. To do this, MTA will offer expanded Light Rail hours on Sundays to BWI airport. In addition, it will add new commuter bus routes to get Baltimore City residents to regional job centers in Columbia, Aberdeen, and Annapolis. Lastly, MTA is planning a new connection between the Odenton and Savage MARC stations to get people to jobs at Fort Meade. Through the BaltimoreLINK plan, MTA forecasts that 131,000 more jobs (36.7 % increase) will become accessible, 205,000 more people will have access to high-frequency transit (34% increase), and 30,000 more people will have access to transit by increasing service area approximately 18 square miles.

Mr. Quinn took time to review the timeline and indicated public hearings for ExpressLINK service will be held in February and March with service beginning in April. MTA is also working on a Google trip planning function that will be available next year when the most significant changes are coming. Mr. Kwaku Duah asked about fare card reciprocity and Mr. Quinn said he had no good answer – but it should be discussed soon to be incorporated. He also mentioned that only 2 percent of trips are paid using the Charm Card and it is sold in only four locations at this time.

Lastly, Mr. Quinn reported that MTA is seeking public comments on this plan through a series of workshops this month, the BaltimoreLINK hotline at 410-454-1998, and online comments via Twitter, Facebook, and mtamaryland.mysidewalk.com. Public engagement will continue until the June 2016 launch of the new Express BusLINK service and the June 2017 launch of CityLINK, along with the totally redesigned LocalLINK bus system.

[Presentation: [BaltimoreLINK: A Plan to Connect Baltimore](#)]

3. PLAN MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (CTP)

Mr. Tyson Byrne provided an overview of the funding process in Maryland for transportation with a focus on local submittal of annual priority letters. The discussion described the relationship of the

Maryland Transportation Plan, the MPO long range plans, and the CTP. In 2010 the General Assembly passed legislation found in Chapter 725 of the Annotated Code of Maryland Title 8, section 612. This is the basis of the updated scope of the priority letters, which are a key consideration in upcoming CTPs. The emphasis is that the letters are not a wish list and must clearly identify priorities in ranked order. The letter is meant to reflect the majority of all elected officials in a jurisdiction and should have as many signatures as possible. Letters are requested to be submitted in April of any given year so that MDOT and the modes can review and begin to assemble the draft CTP which goes on tour in the fall of each year. MDOT is required to submit a CTP to the General Assembly no later than January 20 of a given year. Any projects over \$10 million need to be documented by a supplemental project questionnaire.

Mr. Brian Muldoon described the thorough and frank information they provide in their project questionnaires and asked if other jurisdictions were as honest, and, if these time consuming forms were of real value to MDOT. Mr. Byrne said that the questionnaires were helpful to the process.

[Presentation: Funding Prioritization Process – Chapter 725]

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON UPWP PROJECTS UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) REGIONAL STUDIES AND ACTIVITIES

Mr. Todd Lang distributed the draft FY 2017 UPWP schedule. In preparation for the January BRTB/TC retreat, Mr. Lang explained an exercise to discuss regional project ideas. BMC staff had developed six categories (Travel Trends, Behavior, and Choice – Data Collection, Regional Policies, Corridor/Regional Planning Studies, Opportunity Planning, Resource Planning, Operations Planning, Public Health, and Sponsored Regional Events) with multiple activities within each category. The UPWP project ideas were displayed on boards distributed around the room. Members walked between display boards to hear short project idea presentations from BMC staff. An additional seventh board was provided to capture TC member ideas not already identified. Then the TC members were asked to vote on project ideas, placing one of five voting dots next to the project idea. Mr. Lang then facilitated a group discussion of the six project ideas receiving the most votes (Transit and non-transit users, Transportation options, Sponsored regional events, LOTS agency funding and support, Household travel survey, Traffic management and operation, and Training opportunities and cost). TC members were asked to provide additional thoughts on potential scope, data, and/or local interest related to the six projects. Mr. Lang concluded the exercise soliciting a TC member volunteer for each of the six ideas. The TC volunteers (Ken Choi, Tyson Byrne, Valorie LaCour, Kwaku Duah, Emery Hines, Tara Penders, and Alex Rawls) were asked to work with identified BMC staff members on developing background, objective, and tasks for the six projects. The volunteers were also asked to deliver a short presentation at the January retreat.

[Handout: FY 2017 UPWP – Tentative Schedule]

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON UPWP PROJECTS

- **Smart Cities Grant Program – Discussion**

Mr. Don Halligan briefed the Technical Committee on the “Smart City Challenge” grant. This is a discretionary grant opportunity announced by USDOT on December 2nd, 2015. The turnaround time for the grant application is very quick. The grant opportunity is intended to address how emerging transportation data, technologies, and applications can be integrated with existing systems into a City to address transportation challenges. Baltimore City is eligible and very interested in pursuing the opportunity.

The City, along with the University of Maryland, John’s Hopkins University and the BMC comprise the current team working to develop an initial proposal. Private sector partners are also being considered. The initial proposal is due to USDOT in February and must demonstrate how advanced data and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technologies and applications can be used to reduce congestion, keep travelers safe, protect the environment, respond to climate change, connect underserved communities, and support economic vitality. Five cities will to be selected in March 2016 as part of a short-list, given \$100,000 and invited to develop a more robust proposal for up to a \$50 million grant for implementation and measurement (\$40 million Federal, \$10 million from the Vulcan Foundation). The selection for the finalist is expected in September. The Technical Committee will be kept informed and asked to back requests for letters of support from the BRTB for the forthcoming proposal.

[Presentation: Beyond Traffic: The Smart City Challenge]

- **rMove Travel Survey Application – User Experience**

Mr. Robert Berger briefed the Committee on planning for a future household travel survey and described the features of the rMove travel survey smartphone application. Travel survey applications such as rMove have the potential to replace the paper travel diaries typically used in household travel surveys.

MWCOG has announced plans to conduct a new household travel survey. A pilot test is scheduled for CY 2016 and the survey will be fielded in CY 2017. MWCOG is also testing smartphone applications. BMC collaborated with MWCOG on their 2007-2008 survey; BMC has been asked to evaluate joining MWCOG this time as well.

The rMove application is able to detect the starting and stopping points of a trip. It also offers a customizable trip survey. Once a trip is complete, it displays a map of the trip and prompts the user for details about their trip. It also allows the user to report errors. Once the trip report form is complete, the encrypted data is sent to a server.

In comparison to a paper travel diary, a travel survey application can reduce the survey burden on participants and improve data quality and completeness. It may also help with survey recruitment and decrease the need for post processing of data.

Committee members, as well as staff from MDOT, SHA, MdTA, and BMC, had volunteered to test rMove in mid-December. Of the 16 participants, 10 answered a short Survey Monkey questionnaire on their experience using rMove. Mr. Berger reported on the results:

The questionnaire asked 4 questions covering ease of use, accuracy, drain on battery, and time to receive trip report form. In general, rMove was easy to use and its accuracy was rated as “OK” to “Very Accurate”, although more than half of participants noted that it drained their batteries faster than usual. With a few exceptions, the trip report forms appeared in 30 minutes or less.

Next steps will include the following: 1) evaluate other travel survey applications, 2) review results of MWCOG pilot test, and 3) refine travel survey application specifications.

[Presentation: Travel Diary and Trip Survey - Expanded]

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Regina Aris noted that the FY 2017-2020 TIP cycle is beginning and that packets and a schedule were distributed at the meeting. Project information is due March 1 and Mr. Zach Kaufman is available to assist anyone with questions on the process.

[Handout: Draft FY 2017-2020 TIP Production Schedule (all) Packet of Instructions (submitting members)]

ATTENDANCE

Members

Alex Brun– Maryland Department of the Environment
Tyson Byrne - Maryland Department of Transportation
Ken Choi – Maryland Department of Planning
Kwaku Duah – City of Annapolis Department of Transportation
Scott Graf – Carroll County Department of Planning
Michael Helta – Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
Emery Hines – Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Valorie LaCour - Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Jefferson Miller – Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning
Tara Penders – State Highway Administration
Alex Rawls – Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning
Martha Arzu McIntosh – Anne Arundel County Office of Planning & Zoning

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris - Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Charles Baber - BMC
Robert Berger – BMC
Terry Freeland - BMC
Victor Henry - BMC
Don Halligan - BMC
Todd Lang – BMC
Brian Muldoon – Howard County
Eric Norton – Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Kevin Quinn - MTA
Rebecca Smith – BMC
Sara Tomlinson - BMC