PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 2, 2019
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
5:35 to 7:34 P.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Mark Lotz, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. Mr. Lotz welcomed BRTB Technical Committee Vice Chair, Mr. Joel Gallihue, Chief of Long Range Planning for Harford County to the PAC meeting.

1. PRESENTATION: ENHANCEMENTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS FOR SHORT- AND LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANS

- Mr. Zach Kaufman presented updates BMC staff made to the environmental justice analysis completed for *Maximize2045: A Performance Based Transportation Plan*. All agencies receiving federal assistance must conduct an EJ analysis to ensure adherence to these principles. Several BMC staff members attended advanced training on environmental justice analysis methods last fall. These updates stem from that training and a subsequent review of methods utilized by other MPOs. Highlights of the presentation include:

- Mr. Kaufman reviewed the principles of environmental justice:
  - o To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.
  - o To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
  - o To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay of these protections for minority and low-income populations and the populations it focuses on.

- The USDOT defines low-income individuals as having an income which is at or below the federal poverty level varies by household size. For example, in the Baltimore region, the poverty level is approximately $24,000 per year for a family of four. Minorities are defined at the federal level as a person belonging to the following racial/ethnic groups: Black; Hispanic or Latino; Asian; American Indian and Alaskan Native; or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

  The EJ analysis focuses solely on low-income and minority populations as defined above and doesn't include other vulnerable populations as identified in BMC's Vulnerable Population Index (VPI).

- Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) are the geographic basis for EJ analysis as they are the basis of analysis in the current travel demand model. A TAZ is identified as an EJ area if it has a concentration of households in poverty or minorities greater than the regional average. Minorities make up 42.5 percent of the region's population while 10.2 percent of households in the region fall below the poverty line, so a TAZ is identified as EJ if it has a population of minorities greater than 42.5 percent or more than 10.2% of households are below the poverty line. Some 661 of the region's 1,392 TAZs meet these criteria. A shortcoming of using a regional threshold is that small pockets of EJ populations can be excluded as not all EJ persons live in an EJ TAZ. However, more than 80% of minorities and households in poverty are located in EJ TAZs in the region.

- Additional measures of accessibility, mobility, and proximity to important destinations and services were added to the updated EJ analysis for *Maximize2045*:
  o Average number of jobs and shopping opportunities accessible by auto (within 30 minutes) and transit (within 60 minutes);
  o Average time by auto and transit for commute, shopping, and to the closest hospital and;
  o Percent of the population, by auto and transit, close to a college or university, a hospital, and to a supermarket/public market.

  Mr. Kaufman explained how staff were able to get an average for these measures. For example, for average number of jobs accessible by auto within 30 minutes, the model calculated how many jobs are accessible within a 30 minute drive from every EJ TAZ. Staff then calculated an average across all TAZs to reach the average number of jobs accessible. The process was then repeated for transit.

- Once staff identified populations and travel times, an analysis was done to look at a baseline E+C scenario (existing infrastructure in place and no new capacity adding projects between now and 2045 beyond what is programmed as of FY 2023) and compare this to the projects listed in *Maximize2045*, which includes all projects in the E+C scenario as well as all projects in the preferred alternative of *Maximize2045*.

- The results of the analysis include:
  o On average, EJ TAZs have access to a larger number of jobs and shopping opportunities as compared to non-EJ TAZs. This is partially because EJ TAZs tend to be located in denser areas.
  o Implementation of the preferred alternative does not have much of an impact on travel times – Average travel times change by 2.5% or less in either direction from the E+C to the *Maximize2045* scenario.
  o Auto access is quite good throughout the Baltimore region across all TAZs with >90% of the population lives within a 30-minute auto trip of all of important destinations such as hospitals, supermarkets, and higher education institutions. While the data show that auto access in the region is quite good for both EJ and non-EJ TAZs, it's also important to point out that this isn't helpful if you don't have access to a car. Transit access is significantly less than that for auto.

- ○ Implementation of the *Maximize2045* preferred alternative yields only small changes in the percentage of the population close to these destinations.

- The next long-range transportation plan is expected to utilize the InSITE model and will likely allow for household level analysis in place of TAZ level analysis.

  Additional updates to the EJ analysis can be made in the future in order to look at additional measures for evaluating a plan's potential impact on EJ communities. For example, with access to jobs, the measure doesn't distinguish between job quality and wage. Also, for transit, the measure doesn't take account of times when transit isn't available (for example – second and third shift workers that have trouble getting to work or getting home).

  Previous PAC recommendations to look at jobs accessible by premium public transportation within multiple time thresholds and jobs accessible by walking and other non SOV/non-driving methods of travel may be able to be incorporated as well.

- PAC members offered the following feedback for improving the analysis:
  - ○ Instead of the federal poverty level, which is very low, use area median income or increase the poverty threshold.
  - ○ Consider other data points such as fatalities and injuries by bicycle, walking, and automobile. Also, look at other non-motorized transportation and infrastructure.
  - ○ Look at air quality as a measure of health and the effect of poor air quality on vulnerable populations (Low-income populations are among those most at-risk to adverse health effects from exposure to fine particle pollution. Source: EPA).
  - ○ Consider comparing data to other regions. For example, how would the BRTB's EJ analysis compare to MWCOG's Transportation Planning Boards Equity Emphasis Areas EJ Analysis.

- Lastly, one member asked what the point is of an analysis such as this when the Governor is cutting the budget for the Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)?

[PowerPoint: Environmental Justice Analysis: Updated Methods for Maximize2045]

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

Ms. Jennifer Weeks led the PAC in continued discussion of potential studies and projects being considered for inclusion in the FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and thanked everyone who participated in subcommittee meetings this month. Rather than reviewing the ideas already generated again, Ms. Weeks asked members to think about ways in which the PAC can prioritize the ideas. Specifically, in September the PAC asked staff how these studies fit into bigger picture concepts of regionalism, equity, and public involvement and if there is a scoring mechanism to evaluate UPWP project ideas based on these frameworks. No scoring framework currently exists, so members were asked to generate a list of what they feel are important characteristics for selecting studies. Broad ideas for evaluating projects include:

- How does the project fit in with other UPWP programs and projects?
- Do the projects further goals of the long-range transportation plan?
- Do the projects meet the goals of the Public Participation Plan?
- Do the projects incorporate a public involvement or equity component?

Mr. Gallihue echoed the importance in the planning field and its code of ethics to engage the public in planning at all stages of the process and to ensure that all persons, including those who lack formal organization or influence or are otherwise disadvantaged are included.

In preparation for the next meeting, members were asked to review previous PAC resolutions to determine if there are any opportunities for these previous ideas to be folded into proposed studies or included in the next UPWP as a standalone project. PAC Chairs will discuss ways in which the PAC can further refine and finalize their feedback on ideas for the next UPWP.

[Presentation: PAC Ideas and feedback on FY 2021 UPWP Potential Project Ideas]

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lotz reported that 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 PAC Chairs submitted a recommendation on behalf of the PAC to have a seat at the table in reviewing RFPs submitted. In lieu of this, staff offered PAC members a chance to weigh in on the kinds of things to keep in mind when choosing a consultant firm.

Prior to opening the floor to discussion, Mr. Lotz reminded members of the PAC's Conflict of Interest Policy and asked any members with a conflict to recuse themselves.

ARTICLE VIII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Section 1. Announcing Conflict

Whenever a Committee or Subcommittee member has cause to believe that a matter to be discussed would involve him/her in a conflict of interest, she or he shall announce the conflict of interest and shall request a ruling by the Committee on discussing such matters.

Section 2. Abstention from Decision Making Process

No Committee or Subcommittee member shall be involved in the decision-making process on any matter which would involve a conflict of interest.

No members declared a conflict of interest and members went on to create a list of important characteristics in a firm to conduct the BRTB public involvement activities evaluation project as outlined in the RFP.

Following this discussion, the following announcements were made:

- The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is hosting a series of meetings on the draft Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) through November.

- The MDOT MTA's Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan Commission meeting will be held Tuesday, October 29 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Community College of Baltimore County (10300 Grand Central Ave, Owings Mills, MD 21117).

- MDTA continues to host a series of six Open Houses on the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 1 NEPA (Bay Crossing Study) through October 9. Information shared at these meetings are available online for those unable to attend.

- Larry's Ride is Saturday, October 19 at Oregon Ridge Park. The ride is named for Larry Bensky who was struck by a car and killed in 2010 while bicycling.

- The Turner Station Conservation Teams, Inc. will host its 8th annual Community Resources Information Fair at 6 p.m. on Monday, October 28, 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Members
Michael Davis – Resident, Carroll County
David Drasin – Member, Howard County Multimodal Transportation Advisory Board
Kira Gardner-Marshall – Neighborhood Housing Services Baltimore
Ben Groff – Resident, Baltimore City
Tafadzwa Gwitira – Resident, Baltimore City
Bruce Kinzinger – Bike Harford
Paul Kowzan – Broadway Area Business Association
Mark Lotz – Resident, Harford County
Ian Moller Knudson – Howard County Sierra Club
Audrey Sellers – Accessible Resources for Independence, Inc.
Sharon Smith – Partners In Care
Michael Thompson – Resident, Baltimore County
Jennifer Weeks – Resident, Baltimore City
Cynthia Wyatt – Resident, Anne Arundel County

Staff and Guests
Regina Aris – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Joel Gallihue – BRTB Representative from Harford County
Monica Haines Benkhedda – BMC
Zach Kaufman – BMC