



HANOVER STREET CORRIDOR STUDY
includes the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge



Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Kick-off Meeting
Wednesday, March 30, 2016 – 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

MEETING NOTES

MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Organization
Brian Miller	Under Armour
Kia Calloway	Lakeland
Rupert Denney	Baltimore Industrial Group
Alvin Lee	Larue Square Association
Caroline Paff	Sagamore Development
Dennis Plouff	South Baltimore
Bill Reuter	Ridgely's Delight
Dave Urbanek	Riverside
Janie Tiedeman	AECOM
Josh Crunkleton	AECOM
Odessa Phillip	Assedo Consulting
Gayle Watkins	Assedo Consulting
Valorie LaCour	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Planning Division
Betty Smoot	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Planning Division
Gladys Hurwitz	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Planning Division
Linda Taylor-Newton	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Planning Division
Greg Bauer	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Bridge Division
Caitlin Doolin	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Transit Bureau
Nikia Mack	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Transit Bureau
Raj Sharma	Baltimore City Department of Transportation – Traffic
Graham Young	Traffic
Brenton Flickinger	Baltimore City Department Planning
Ethan Cohen	Mayor's Office of Economic/Neighborhood Development

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting was to kick-off communications with the Hanover Street Bridge Multimodal Corridor Study Community Advisory Panel (CAP).

DISCUSSION

Valorie LaCour, Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) Planning Division Chief, began the meeting by welcoming attendees to DOT. She provided a brief background on the project and the individuals that had been asked to participate in the process.

Odessa Phillip, Community Outreach Manager for the project, facilitated the discussion and asked each person at the table to give their name, indicate which organization or company they worked for, and to offer a quick statement about their current uses of the Hanover Street Bridge and the corridor.

Following initial introductions, Janie Tiedeman, the Project Manager for the Study Team, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation. She explained that the project is actually a two-year study of the Hanover Street Bridge and corridor, extending from Wells Street to Reedbird Avenue. She indicated that the purpose of the project is to identify the steps that will need to be followed to determine if the bridge will need to be repaired or replaced. She discussed the project goals and touched on the ways that the team will gather information to provide DOT with guiding principles to advance the future of the corridor while examining various elements such as transportation, education, recreation, regional competitiveness, and economic development. The final product will be an implementation plan that could be used for a future project involving the structure and the corridor.

Josh Crunkleton, the Project Engineer for the Study Team, provided additional background information on the study corridor and reiterated that this is a 1.4-mile corridor study, not just a Hanover Street Bridge study. An overview of the process that the team will use over the course of the study was discussed, as well as the milestone schedule that the team will use to advance the work. The project will include traffic studies, examining non-motorized uses in the corridor (pedestrian and bicycle access), marine uses, and regional and local economic studies.

Odessa provided an overview of the project team that will assist with the study, including both the CAP and an Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) that will convene later in the year. Both groups will meet at project milestones.

The IAG is comprised of individuals from federal, state, and local agencies and is tasked with providing information on current and future projects adjacent to the corridor. Both the CAP and IAG will provide valuable input into the process to help the Study Team develop a comprehensive plan that considers the current and future needs of the region and residents and businesses along the corridor.

The CAP members were asked to use color-coded push pins on the study area map/board to indicate where they live (blue), work (green), and a place that they regularly frequent within the project area (pink). Destinations for work and recreation included areas around the marina and the waterfront, adjacent to the nearby trails and in the Port Covington area. *The team noted that many of the areas were outside the limits of the map which didn't allow for participants to accurately indicate where they lived in the project corridor.*

Odessa conducted an informal survey of the CAP members to determine how they currently use the bridge and the corridor. A visual review of raised hands showed that most CAP members didn't cross the bridge daily but when they did, they were using it to travel to/from home or work. There were a handful of CAP members who walk and bike for pleasure over the bridge and to access the Gwynn's Falls Trail. None of the individuals present use transit in the corridor.

The CAP members were asked if there were community groups that they felt should have been included on the CAP and they identified Locust Point, Federal Hill, Sharp-Leadenhall, Brooklyn, Curtis Bay and Westport neighborhood groups. Some of these neighborhood organizations were included on the invitation list and didn't send representatives. The Study Team will share the comprehensive list of groups that were invited to participate. CAP members were asked to provide contact information for groups not present.

Ethan Cohen asked about the limits of the study area. He wanted to understand how far the study area extended on each side of the corridor, especially as it pertained to the economic analysis being conducted. Josh indicated that the economic analysis area is a larger geographic area than the corridor study area shown at the meeting. Betty Smoot, the lead DOT planner for the project, explained that the team was essentially looking at a ¼ mile width on each side of Hanover Street for the corridor planning effort and to identify communities to engage with and that the economic analysis area reflects communities that are within ½ mile of the project corridor. Janie further explained that the study is locally concentrated on the Hanover Street corridor and includes residential, commercial, and industrial areas, truck routes, traffic signaling, traffic flow, and all overlaps of each mode to consider all impacts. The study team will use the Baltimore regional travel demand model to forecast future traffic in the corridor based on vehicular traffic and land uses in the region.

Ruppert Denney shared that he is representing both the Baltimore Industrial Group and is a business owner moving items to and through the Port. He indicated that the industrial interest for the project is concerned about safely and conveniently moving cargo and that they are concerned about through traffic instead of local traffic. Truckers would like to move as efficiently as possible for the lowest cost and find themselves cutting through neighborhoods and local streets at times to avoid high tolls, despite being encouraged not to do so. He explained some of the challenge for freight to move across Locust Point into Curtis Bay and that the Marine Terminal services freight that isn't ultimately destined for sites within Maryland.

He also explained that as the Fort McHenry Tunnel and Baltimore Harbor Tunnel become more degraded, or in the case of an emergency, there is concern within the trucking community that there is no other way into and out of Baltimore. Currently, truckers use I-95, I-695, and I-70 for destinations to the north and west and I-75 and I-895 for destinations to the south.

Alvin Lee of the Larue Square Association highlighted the neighborhood interests in local traffic operations. He wants to ensure that consideration is given to the impacts that the community will endure during any construction activity that occurs on the bridge and along the corridor. He also highlighted concerns for pedestrians and cyclists using the corridor because of poor connectivity. The walking areas across the bridge do not feel safe and as a person uses the stairs at the southern end to access Gwynns Falls Trail, the terrain is tricky as it changes from pavement to stone to mud, often becoming slick during rain or inclement weather events.

Caroline Paff with Sagamore Development provided some insights into the work that is being done in Port Covington. She explained that the extent of their work begins at the northern bridge approach and extends through the interchange at I-95, including Hanover Street between McComas Street at the northbound trumpet ramp. The Port Covington development is proposing reconstruction from the northern side of the bridge through the end of the study area that includes 15 proposed highway improvements. She offered to share information developed from her engineering team with the Study Team to help reduce duplication of efforts and to keep work coordinated.

Valorie indicated that there are several activities underway in and around the project corridor and she will coordinate the sharing of information between groups.

A participant indicated that there are some challenges for vehicles using the trumpet ramp to get out of South Baltimore. Currently, users make an illegal U-turn at the ramp. It was suggested that a roundabout

in the area may be a better traffic operation. Caroline indicated that the Sagamore team had investigated the inclusion of a roundabout and there were some large challenges with constructing one at this location. As part of their work, the Sagamore team has entered into a landscaping Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DOT to allow them to maintain the areas adjacent to the entrance of South Baltimore, near Port Covington. They are seeking additional MOAs along the corridor but have run into challenges with homeless encampments under the bridge on both ends of the bridge.

Ethan Cohen described a desire to have a “sense of arrival” when entering South Baltimore at Potee Street to allow it to become a gateway into the communities in South Baltimore. Currently, the landmarks are the BP gas stations at either end of the bridge.

Ethan also indicated that there is a Middle Branch Park Access Study being planned for this year and asked if environmental information could be shared between the studies. Janie responded that this would be possible, as long as that study’s timing corresponds to this study.

The South Baltimore Neighborhood Association is contemplating a Hanover Street/Wells Street gateway and has been coordinating with City agencies to get a sign placed at the corner welcoming people to their community. They have also considered the painting of a mural and the installation of a sculpture on the northeast corner of Hanover Street and Wells Streets.

Caroline indicated that Sagamore is hoping to see tremendous change in the corridor that will make Middle Branch a connection to all other South Baltimore neighborhoods and create an economic market.

Kia Calloway of Lakeland indicated that she is always uncomfortable with the riding surface on the bridge. The potholes are extremely bad and are only patched. Additionally, there tends to be excessive speeding and the overhead lane signals are frequently wrong.

The team discussed the possibility of including a median on the bridge instead of the reversible travel lane.

Alvin questioned if the drawbridge will ever be opened again. He further queried whether or not the team needed to investigate the bridge being able to open because there is a need for dredging to enable larger vessels based upon the information he last heard. Janie indicated that this question is one the study team will investigate as part of the project. Ruppert added that there is no maritime/commercial interest in using the drawbridge and that dredging is very expensive.

Brent Flickinger from the Baltimore City Department of Planning further elaborated on questions of the roadway surface as well as opening the bridge. He asked why the public has to wait for the study to be completed before repaving can be done to the bridge. He also asked if there are other options that can be explored in the meantime. He also wanted to know if the project team could investigate the possibility of using zoning rules to limit the sizes of boats traveling to the marina. He suggested that the team conduct a study on the types of boats that dock in the Marina and ask boaters why they dock their boats there and not in the Middle Branch.

One participant mentioned the difficulty in following the current roadway signs. The interstate signage at I-395 North and I-95 South coming into downtown is confusing and causes near-collisions as users try to navigate the corridor.

Alvin indicated that at one point in the late 1990's there was a plan for Harbor Hospital to expand. They had intended to close Hanover Street and expand Potee Street to six lanes. He wanted to know if coordination with the hospital was part of the study to know what is happening in the corridor.

Ethan indicated a desire to have the project team think creatively about what the market is in the region over the longer term as a method of equalizing the future use of the bridge.

Ruppert indicated that there is difficulty for the workforce to actually access the potential business corridor that is being developed because the bus system is archaic. The labor force from east and west Baltimore cannot easily travel into South Baltimore. It takes individuals approximately 1 ½ hours to get into South Baltimore using transit.

Caroline indicated that Sagamore had made a similar comment to the B-Link project team and in conversations with MTA Administrator Paul Comfort and Secretary of Transportation Pete Rahn. The first round of the B-Link proposal seemed to have completely neglected South Baltimore.

The CAP members agreed that they feel that the existing bridge architecture is beautiful and that they would be concerned about the loss of its historical nature. They would like to know about maintenance and investment in the existing bridge so that it can be kept in productive use.

From the cruise terminal perspective, the Hanover Street Bridge is the first thing that is seen when people enter Baltimore, so keeping the bridge intact could be considered important to the people in South Baltimore.

Following the general discussion, Odessa led the group through a review of the corridor using Google Maps street view to allow each team member to visualize the experience of traveling across the bridge. The following comments were listed by the group:

- There are few trees along the road
- The landscaping is poor
- The area is a veritable no-man's land for pedestrians and cyclists as the connections are narrow and disappear at some locations
- The pedestrians only have a three-foot sidewalk and no buffer between them and vehicular traffic in the travel lanes
- The overhead signals for the reversible lanes are not always correct
- There is no pedestrian level lighting
- It was suggested to close the bridge one day per month and use the drawbridge for youth regatta days, or to encourage people to use other modes of transportation in the region
- The sidewalks are overgrown with vegetation
- The billboards should be eliminated
- The bike path underneath the bridge feels very dark and unsafe

Valorie encouraged CAP members to email thoughts, opinions, and concerns to Odessa (odessa.phillip@baltimorecity.gov) anytime and to talk about the Hanover Street Bridge Multimodal Corridor Study to community associations, business partners, families and friends to cultivate a collective voice for the project.

The CAP prefers to meet late mornings (approximately 11:00 AM) or late evenings and on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursdays. The next meeting date of the CAP will be given at a later time.

COMMUNITIES/BUSINESSES INVITED TO PARTICIPATE ON THE CAP

- 7-Eleven
- ✓ Baltimore Industrial Group
- ✓ Casino Local Development Council
- ✓ Cherry Hill Tenant Council
- Davita Harbor Park
- Hanover Street Shopping Center
- ✓ Lakeland
- ✓ Lakeland Community Association
- ✓ Larue Square Association
- ✓ MedStar Harbor Hospital
- ✓ Riverside Neighborhood Association
- ✓ Sagamore Development
- ✓ South Baltimore Neighborhood Association
- ✓ Under Armour
- ✓ Westport Neighborhood Association

✓ - Confirmed Participants

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Distribute copy of the PowerPoint to the CAP members	Odessa	04/18/2016
Distribute list of CAP members to the team	Odessa	04/18/2016
Circulate a draft copy of meeting minutes to the team	Odessa	04/18/2016
Share information about the project with the community	CAP members	Feb 2018