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**Study Maps Ways to Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to "Underutilized" Rail Transit Stations**

Some of Metro’s busiest stations, like Gallery Place and Metro Center, operate at or near their full capacity during peak periods. Trains on most Metro lines heading into the downtown core during the morning commute are routinely packed.

But that’s not the case across the whole system. Many stations see only a small fraction of the passengers they were built to handle, and most trains heading out of the city during the morning commute are usually all but empty.

A recent Transportation Planning Board study looked at ways to take advantage of this unused capacity by making it easier for people who live or work near the most underutilized stations to get to those stations on foot or by bicycle.

The study began by examining ridership at all 91 Metro stations and several MARC and VRE commuter rail stations throughout the region. Ultimately it identified 25 stations capable of accommodating additional riders that also have the greatest potential to see increased ridership demand in the next decade, either because of anticipated job growth or because a significant portion of people living near the station depend on transit to access...
employment opportunities.

All 25 of the identified stations are located in one of the region's 141 Activity Centers -- existing residential and commercial hubs where local and regional planners anticipate most of the region's future population and job growth occurring. Most of the identified stations are outside the regional core, and many are on the less-developed eastern side of the region.

Having identified the 25 stations, the study then looked at potential infrastructure improvements that would make it easier to get to each of the stations on foot or by bicycle.

In all, the study identified more than 3,000 improvements, including new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, bike parking, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage. Most of the improvements had already been included in existing local plans and Metro station area plans, though some were identified by a field team organized by the TPB as part of the study.

The full list of planned and recommended improvements is available both as a database and as an interactive, online map. The TPB envisions local jurisdictions using the database and map when prioritizing local projects and funding, reviewing development applications for areas around transit stations, and when planning improvements that cross jurisdictional lines.

The TPB plans to use the list to inform the selection of projects under its Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) and Transportation Alternatives (TA) programs. The TLC Program funds planning studies and preliminary engineering or conceptual design projects to promote integrated land-use and transportation planning at the local level. Transportation Alternatives awards federal funds for the construction of capital improvements to support non-driving modes like walking and bicycling.

Metro will also use the list as it works with jurisdictions and the TPB to further analyze potential pedestrian and bicycle improvements near stations and identify those with the greatest potential to boost ridership.

The TPB's recent study of pedestrian and bicycle access to underutilized rail transit stations weaves together several themes of the TPB's Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, adopted in early 2014. Among other things, the Priorities Plan calls for maximizing capacity on the existing transit system, enhancing circulation in Activity Centers, and expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, especially near transit stations.

The study was funded under the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) program, which supports efforts to improve the efficiency of transportation systems, reduce environmental impacts and the need for costly infrastructure investments, and to ensure efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade.
To learn more about the “Improving Pedestrian/Bicycle Access at Select Rail Stations” study or to access the database and interactive map of potential improvements, go to www.mwcog.org/tlc/TCSP.

Applications for technical assistance under the TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program is open through June 3. For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/TLC.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region. The TPB is responsible for directing the continuing transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the states and the local communities in the region. The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.