

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

May 20, 2009

Farrell Keough, CAC Chairman

On May 14, the CAC conducted its regular monthly meeting in Frederick. This meeting included regular CAC/TPB business, but also featured briefings and discussion about issues of particular importance to Frederick.

Welcome

- Farrell Keough, CAC chair, welcomed observers from Frederick and explained the mission and activities of the CAC.
- TPB Chairman Charles Jenkins provided some background on the regional transportation planning process and the TPB. He said he appreciated the committee's decision to hold its monthly meeting in Frederick because it is important to build understanding and empathy for transportation needs of jurisdictions like Frederick.
- Paul Smith, Frederick City Alderman and TPB member, thanked the committee for making the trip to Frederick.
- Senator Brinkley also welcomed participants. He noted that Frederick has become a pass-through for traffic coming from Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He said that I-270, in particular, has become a major chokepoint.

Briefing on the TPB Scenario Study and Development of a Priority Rapid Bus Network

Ron Kirby, COG Director of Transportation Planning, provided an update on recent efforts of the TPB's Scenario Study Task Force. Mr. Kirby noted that in response to a CAC recommendation, staff is currently working on an Aspirations Scenario, which will include a network of variably priced lanes and extensive rapid bus service. Mr. Kirby said the TPB will be considering whether to seek funding under a competitive grant in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to implement selected corridors of a regional priority bus transit network.

Questions and comments included the following points:

- ***Excess revenue?*** Why is it that some toll road projects are expected to generate excess revenues for express bus service, while others do not? Mr. Kirby explained that in general, projects that use existing right-of-way, such as the HOT lanes on I-395, would generate additional revenue. Projects like the Intercounty

Connector do not use existing right-of-way and therefore will not generate excess revenue.

- **Price caps?** Would value priced lanes have price caps? Mr. Kirby answered that there will be no cap; in order to maintain an acceptable level of service, the price would need “to go as high as it takes.” TPB analysis has found that in some cases, the cost per mile could be as high as \$1 per mile.
- **Reduction in driving?** Would the new scenarios have a significant impact on reducing driving (vehicle miles traveled – VMT)? Mr. Kirby answered that the VMT analysis has not been performed yet. But he said that the public transit in the new scenarios is much more extensive than the scenarios previously studied. A CAC member noted that the scenarios will not simply reduce VMT; they will improve highway system performance as well.
- **Support of transit agencies?** Are the transit agencies excited about the new transit proposed in the scenarios, particularly rapid bus lines? Mr. Kirby said the transit agencies, to this point, have been very supportive.
- **Buses vs. rail?** A CAC member said she was concerned that the scenarios include major expansion in bus service, but not rail. Mr. Kirby said that a number of rail projects are included in the scenarios. However, he noted that bus service is faster and cheaper to implement.
- **Land-use changes?** Are local jurisdictions willing to change land-use patterns in order to support extensive new public transit? Mr. Kirby answered that land use is a continuing challenge.
- **Fleet turnover.** A CAC member noted that recent TPB analysis found that the region’s vehicle fleet is not turning over as quickly as earlier anticipated. He said this factor will influence the region’s ability to achieve the goals of the “What Would It Take?” Scenario.
- **Signal retiming.** A CAC member called for more attention to signal retiming. Mr. Kirby noted that it is difficult to secure adequate funding for regular retiming of signals. He said the benefits of retiming are quickly lost unless signal timing is checked on a fairly frequent basis.
- **Monorail?** A CAC member said he would like monorail to be given more extensive consideration. He asked if this could be discussed at a future meeting. On the monorail question, Mr. Kirby noted that community development goals are easier to achieve with at-grade transit systems, such as light rail.

Other CAC Business

- John Swanson of the TPB staff announced that the CAC meeting on June 11 would be devoted a public forum on the FY2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He noted that this forum essentially marks the end of the TIP development cycle. The public comment on the TIP will begin on June

11 and the TPB is expected to approve the TIP on July 15. He said that in response to CAC comments and requests, the forum will include big-picture analysis of TIP funding, including breakdowns by project type.

- Because there was no quorum, Chairman Keough announced that the CAC would elect vice chairs at the June 11 meeting.
- Larry Martin, CAC member, said that he had attended a meeting of the new Air Quality Public Advisory Committee (AQPAC), which serves as a citizens committee for the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. He said AQPAC is interested in collaborating with the TPB's CAC.
- Mr. Kirby briefed the committee on upcoming TPB agenda items, including an announcement that MDOT intends to include the Purple Line in the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). Several CAC members expressed concern that the prioritization of the Purple Line will lead the state to continue to ignore the needs of I-270, including the Corridor Cities Transitway.

Briefings and Discussion on Frederick County and the City of Frederick

Richard Griffin, Director of Economic Development at the City of Frederick, spoke about growth issues in Frederick. He noted that that Frederick has a diverse economy, but Fort Detrick and the National Cancer Institute is very important to the community, providing a total of 8,000 jobs. He drew attention to the transportation challenges arising from the federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) changes.

Mr. Alan Imhoff, Frederick City Alderman and active participant at the Council of Governments, gave a briefing on BRAC. He said that transportation is the "number one issue" related to BRAC. For example, he said, recent analysis has found that many of the employees who are being transferred to Fort Meade will continue to live in Virginia and will commute to Maryland. For the most part, the military is not paying for transportation improvements related to BRAC changes.

John Thomas and Sherry Burford from the Frederick County Division of Planning briefed the CAC on county growth and transportation services and plans. Mr. Thomas said a public meeting on the I-270 Multimodal Study will be held on June 18 at Monocacy Middle School in Frederick. He said the cost of proposed road portion of the I-270 project in Frederick County alone is \$1.6 billion for "full build." Ms. Burford briefed the CAC on transit services in the county and improvement plans. She said the "big new transit project" for the county would be new service on I-270.

Following the presentations, citizens made the following comments:

- Improvements on I-270 will never happen.
- Public transit will never really work in Frederick because of the dispersal of jobs and housing.

- Congestion cannot be solved. It will be present “till the day I die.” This condition is partly linked to a sense that the state of Maryland ignores Frederick County.
- Because of congestion, it is unrealistic to consider Frederick a “host” destination in case of a national emergency, such as a terrorist attack on Washington.
- It is difficult for people to use fuel-efficient vehicles because they don’t physically fit inside those vehicles.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Meeting, May 14, 2009

Members in Attendance

1. Farrell Keough, MD, Chair
2. Bill Klenke, MD
3. Gail Parker, VA
4. Lynn Shanton, MD
5. Emmet Tydings, MD
6. Larry Martin, DC (called in)

Members Not in Attendance

1. Jim Larsen, VA
2. Shirley Williams, DC
3. Trudy Reeves, DC
4. Paul DeMaio, DC
5. Allen Muchnick, VA
6. Maureen Budetti, VA
7. Roland Gunn, VA
8. Harold Foster, DC

Elected Officials

Charles Jenkins, TPB Chair and Frederick County Councilmember
 Paul Smith, Frederick City Alderman
 Alan Imhoff, Frederick City Alderman
 David Brinkley, Maryland State Senator

Staff/Others

Ron Kirby, COG/TPB
 John Swanson, COG/TPB
 John Thomas, Frederick County
 Sherry Burford, Frederick County
 Richard Griffin, Director of Economic Development, City of Frederick
 Billy Shreve
 Dick Cheney
 Pat Cheney
 Lori Keough
 Joan McIntyre
 Kim Cable
 Catherine Forrence
 Bob Smariga
 Mark Friis
 Ryan Harvey
 Chistine Demas
 Dial Keju
 Woodie Woodrum
 Blaine Young
 Richard Posey
 Henry Felices
 Jim Gangawere



Charles A. Jenkins
County Commissioner
Frederick County, Maryland

May 15, 2009

Farrell Keough, Chairman
Members of the Citizen Advisory Committee
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Farrell and Committee Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending the CAC meeting in Frederick on Thursday, May 14. So often we hear that "normal citizens" believe they are not heard by persons making decisions and I believe that conducting the meeting here in Frederick helped to alleviate some of that type of frustration. This was apparent by the remarks made during the meeting regarding your traveling on I-270 during rush hour. The extra time you took to participate in this meeting was appreciated.

Thanks to Larry Martin, also, for participating by phone.

Taking a meeting "on the road" always requires additional preparation and I truly appreciate the extra effort taken by everyone, especially John Swanson and Ron Kirby.

The information given to the Committee by Sherry Burford, John Thomas and Richard Griffin was helpful and appreciated. Thank you for the care you took in the preparation of the PowerPoint presentations.

A final thanks to Frederick County IIT staff who did an outstanding job ensuring that the meeting was aired live in the usual high-quality manner. Other IIT staff provided technical support for the meeting by coordinating the phone connections for Committee members choosing to participate by phone and monitoring the entire meeting to ensure all went smoothly.

I continue to find that Frederick County staff performs above average on a consistent basis.

Cheers!

Charles

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