

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the February 6 Technical Committee Meeting

Minutes were approved as written with the addition of Mr. Weissberg to the list of attendees.

2. Review of the Final Draft FY2010 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Miller distributed the final draft of the UPWP for FY 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). He said that the draft of the document was presented to the TPB at its February 18 meeting, and pointed out the changes in this version from the February version. He said that the TPB will be asked to adopt the program on March 19 and it will be submitted to FHWA and FTA for their approval by July 1.

He reviewed the budget totals in a handout of Table 1 and said that there is still some uncertainty because the USDOT federal FY 2009 appropriation is before Congress for action. He said that the FY 2010 funding allocation to be provided by MDOT for FTA will be considerably lower and the FHWA allocation will be higher than the current FY 2009 level. For VDOT, he said that the FY 2010 FHWA funding level is lower than the FY 2009 level to reflect the federal rescission as required under the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. He pointed out that the DDOT FHWA funding level was now assumed to be the same as the FY 2009 and did not reflect a federal rescission.

In addition, he said that the budget estimate assumes that \$1,794,000 of unobligated funds from FY 2008 will be available. With these assumptions, the total budget estimate for FY 2010 is about \$212,000 more than in the February version, and \$276,000 more than the current FY 2009 budget level. He distributed a revised Table 2 that showed the allocation to the technical assistance programs and \$207,000 to Work Activity 5 C to conduct the spring Regional HOV Monitoring project. He explained that the budget for this monitoring effort is still about \$23,000 below what is necessary.

Mr. Miller reviewed the process of identifying certain projects and funding in the current FY 2009 program that would not be completed by June 30 for carryover to FY 2010. He then reviewed a memo on the proposed FY 2009 project amendments and carryover of FY 2009 funding to the FY 2010 UPWP. He said they would be incorporated into the final version of the FY 2010 document after TPB approval at the March meeting.

The Committee recommended that the final version of the FY 2010 UPWP and the FY 2009 amendments and carryover funding be presented for the Board's approval at its March 18 meeting.

3. **Review of the Final Draft FY 2010 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)**

Mr. Ramfos referred to the handout that was in the agenda packet and reviewed the information that was presented to the TPB on the draft FY 2010 CCWP at the February 18, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the series of letters between TPB staff and VDOT were attached to the CCWP along with the issue statement on the cover of the agenda item that went to the TPB that was in the agenda packet. Mr. Ramfos explained the exchange of letters which began on December 4, 2008 with VDOT's request to terminate its participation in the Telework TERM and then an additional letter dated January 26, 2009 requesting a withdrawal from the administration portion of the Employer Outreach TERM and to administer the pass-thru funds to the local jurisdictions. He stated that TPB staff supported VDOT's request to use the Telework TERM funding to marketing and advertise its Telework Virginia project, however, staff was not supportive of VDOT's request to terminate its participation in the Employer Outreach TERM. He also said that this approach would diminish the regional integrity and effectiveness of this long-standing and highly effective program. Nevertheless, staff has complied with VDOT's order and has removed the funding from the FY 2010 CCWP which amounts to about \$434,000.

Next, Mr. Ramfos pointed out some of the substantive changes made to the document including changes on pages 9 and 10 of the funding amounts to reflect VDOT's reduced funding for both the Employer Outreach and Telework TERMS which amounts to a \$513,000 total reduction in work program funds. On page 9, each of the state funding agencies portions are shown and have been adjusted accordingly. He then reviewed the changes made on Pages 30 and 31 where several of the regional component tasks for the Employer Outreach TERM have now been shifted to jurisdictional components. He also gave some examples of what the changes would mean. For instance, the task of TPB staff providing information to employers on voluntary commuting actions will now only be performed for the District of Columbia and Maryland. This also holds true for the provisions of marketing materials to employers.

Finally, on page 33, Mr. Ramfos pointed out that Tasks A & B; Local Agency Funding and Support and DC and Maryland Program Administration were changed to reflect the change to the Employer Outreach TERM. Mr. Foster asked whether or not marketing materials would be available to Northern Virginia jurisdictions. Mr. Ramfos stated that the customized employer materials as well as regional employer-based marketing materials would not be available to employers in Northern Virginia or to Northern Virginia local jurisdictions based on VDOT's action.

4. Update on Final Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment and Submissions for the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP

The final scope of work was included in the mailout. Ms. Posey pointed out the VDOT, MDOT, and WMATA comment letters attached to the scope, and noted the changes made to the work tasks as a result of these comments. The changes, shown with shading, affect HOV and transit constraint assumptions in the travel demand modeling. The updates include assuming all HOV facilities in the region will convert to HOV 3+ in 2020 (previously was 2010), and that transit trips will be constrained at the 2020 level (previously at the 2010 level).

Ms. Posey told the group that the TPB adopted the conformity scope of work, along with the project inputs, at its February meeting. She noted that the current schedule calls for completion of a draft report in June, and adoption of a final report in July.

Chairman Erenrich asked if funding issues for transit maintenance and service affect conformity. Ms. Posey replied no, that some service changes are allowed and expected without affecting conformity, and that the transit base is updated each year to reflect current service changes. Mr. Miller commented that funding will be reviewed in the financial analysis and that the bulk will probably go towards operations and maintenance. Mr. Ashby noted that funding expectations and available funding are growing farther apart. Mr. Miller said that operations and maintenance are not federally funded. Mr. Kirby noted that stimulus money may not be used for operations.

5. Briefing on Findings from the 2007/2008 Household Travel Survey

Mr. Griffiths gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting some of the jurisdictional changes in commuting patterns from the 2007/2008 Household Travel Survey. He noted that the biggest change between the 1994 and 2007/2008 Household Travel Surveys was the increase in the transit commuting share and the decrease in the auto passenger/carpooling modal share. He stated that he would be briefing the TPB on these findings at their March 18th meeting.

Mr. Biesiadny noted that there was a significant expansion of Metrorail and local jurisdiction bus service between the 1994 and 2007/2008 Household Travel Surveys and suggested that Mr. Griffiths include this in his presentation to the TPB.

Mr. Griffiths agreed that was a good suggestion and he would include this information in his presentation.

Mr. Kirby noted the slide in the presentation that showed that about two-thirds of the transit commuters were receiving Smart Benefits and asked Mr. Griffiths to see if he could get information from WMATA on the growth of this program between 1994 and 2008 and include this information in the presentation for the TPB.

Mr. Griffiths agreed to do so.

Ms. Backmon asked Mr. Griffiths about the large decrease in the auto passenger/carpooling modal share and noted that the number of Prince William County carpools had increased between 1994 and 2007/2008.

Mr. Griffiths responded that some of the decrease in the auto passenger mode share was likely because changes in the workplace that allowed employees to telecommute and work more flexible work hours and thus making it harder to find carpooler riders willing to commit to a more rigid daily carpool schedule . He also noted that the central employment area cordon counts had also shown a drop in carpool and vanpool passengers. He agreed that there were a lot of Prince William carpools using the I-95 and I-66 HOV lanes and he would look into this issue further.

Mr. Foster noted that the slide in the presentation on the walk/bike commuting mode share was 0% for Prince William County. He stated that while the walk/bike commuting mode share for Prince William County residents was probably very small, there still were some Prince William County residents who walked or biked to work. He suggested that commuting mode shares in the presentation be rounded to the nearest one-tenth of a percent rather than the nearest whole percent.

Mr. Griffiths agreed to make this change in the presentation.

6. Status Report on Traffic Signal Optimization in the Washington Region

Mr. Meese distributed handouts and introduced Mr. Jones, the Chair of the Traffic Signals Subcommittee. Mr. Jones will make the presentation to the TPB on March 18. This status report was requested by the TPB at the January 28 meeting, in the context of discussions of the CLRP update. The topic also followed the regional 2002-2005 signal optimization Transportation Emissions Reduction Measure (TERM).

Mr. Jones described the process of computer and data-based signal optimization. It was noted that system optimization does not always mean minimal delay for an individual motorist, due to factors such as high cross-street traffic volumes; high numbers of left or right turns; the need to accommodate pedestrians; or travel in the opposite direction of predominant flow.

TPB staff conducted a survey of the region's traffic signal agencies in February and March 2009. Respondents reported the number of their signals that had been optimized within the three-year period of calendar years 2006 to 2008 (three years being an engineering rule-of-thumb for how often signals on average should be optimized). Signals were divided into four categories with preliminary draft results as follows:

- A total of 80% of signals were either computer optimized or spot-checked during the period.

- 56% of signals were optimized during the period using computer and data-based analysis.
- 24% were checked and, if necessary, adjusted (non-computer-based methods).
- 18% were reported as not checked during the period.
- No report was received for systems representing approximately 2% of the signals.
- These draft results were subject to change based on further review or further results received prior to the TPB meeting.

Results of this survey were not directly comparable to the results of the previous TERM because the data collection methodology had changed. For the 2002 to 2005 TERM, a weighted average methodology was used, giving half weights to non-computer methods. If the 2005 methodology is applied to the 2008 data, the percentage of optimized signals remained the same in 2008 as it was in 2005 (a weighted average of 68%).

Mr. Mokhtari asked whether this meant that there had been no improvement in signal optimization in the region since 2005. Mr. Meese responded that there had been improvement, because many of the highest priority signals were now being optimized more frequently than once every three years. He agreed to revise the presentation to the TPB to make this point clearer.

Comparison of the old and new results also potentially showed the number of signals added in the region from 2002 to 2008. However, there was caution expressed for this number since it was secondarily calculated rather than directly surveyed from agencies, and was subject to rounding errors or other uncertainty.

In response to a question from Chairman Erenrich on the location and cost of new signals, Mr. Jones noted that most of the new signals likely were added in outer jurisdictions in growing areas. Many were installed by developers in conjunction with developments, complying with jurisdictional technical standards and warrants. Mr. Meese noted that the survey did not ask questions about how many signals were installed, where they were installed, and what installation costs were, and recommended against including this information in the TPB presentation.

In response to a further question from Chairman Erenrich, Mr. Meese stated that all of the large agencies and jurisdictions had responded to the survey; the agencies that had not reported as of this time were agencies with small signal systems.

Mr. Kirby recommended an additional slide to cover some of the points brought up during the Technical Committee meeting today, particularly regarding how agencies check on whether newly optimized timings are successful.

Chairman Erenrich discussed the issue of Montgomery County's desire to upgrade its 30-year-old signal system, and whether this type of information should be included in the presentation. Mr. Meese noted that the survey did not ask questions on this type of information. Mr. Jones recommended keeping the presentation focused on the results of the survey conducted, and perhaps there could be another survey in the future if desired on the other issues discussed, such as costs, maintenance, upgrades, and new signal installations.

7. Update on Amendments to the FY2009-2014 TIP to include American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funded Transportation Projects

Mr. Kirby reviewed his presentation at the February 18 TPB meeting, where the TPB was briefed on a summary of the transportation funding available for the region under ARRA and on the timing and process for funding projects.

Mr. Srikanth reported on the VDOT process to develop ARRA projects and explained that a web site was established to receive project lists from across the state. He said that of the total \$695 million for transportation \$235 needs to be obligated by July and the rest by March 2010. He explained that the state priorities for funding are bridges, BRAC projects and recently cut projects. He said that the Northern Virginia region is allocated about \$50 million and said the NVTA has a list of projects. He mentioned that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will meet March 19 to review the statewide projects. He indicated that VDOT would have a TIP amendment for FTA ARRA funding for PRTC and VRE projects this month.

Ms. Erickson reported on the MDOT process and said that the first phase of ARRA projects was presented to the TPB at its February 18 meeting. She said that in the second phase MDOT will solicit projects from the local jurisdictions. She said that MDOT would not have any TIP amendments for ARRA projects this month.

Mr. Weissberg inquired about how and when local projects should be submitted. Ms. Erickson said that the process is being finalized and that there would be workshops on it.

Mr. Kirby reviewed a letter he received from the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure requesting accountability information on the projects funded by the sub allocated amounts under the Highway Infrastructure funding of ARRA. The request calls for detailed project data to be submitted by April 4. He said that TPB staff would work closely with the DOTs to obtain this information. He also referred to an article from the *New York Times* about how several states have different approaches for using ARRA funds for transportation projects. He mentioned that MDOT's approach was highlighted in the article.

8. Update on the Development of a Regional BRT Project for Submission for a Competitive Grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Mr. Eichler and Ms. Bansal presented slides describing a package of potential rapid bus lines in the region, developed by TPB staff under the direction of the TPB Scenario Study Task Force for potential funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The presentation began with a description the ARRA and its components, including a \$1.5 billion competitive discretionary program for funding regionally or nationally significant multi-modal transportation projects. Next, it described how a regional package of bus transit lines could qualify for funding, bring new levels of mobility to the region, and get better use out of existing resources. This was followed by a description of what causes delay to buses, and a series of slides describing potential solutions to these causes of delay. Finally, a proposal for a 5-corridor network of express/rapid bus transit was described.

Mr. Biesiadny inquired as to how the operating costs of this rapid bus transit proposal would be covered, since the ARRA only covers capital costs. Mr. Eichler replied that the proposal isn't for new service but instead to link together existing services and make them run more efficiently through a series of priority treatments along the running-way. The proposal would result in the reduction of existing local services to be replaced with enhanced longer range express or skip-stop operation. However, the local services would also benefit from the running-way improvements.

Chairman Erenrich inquired about a recently issued COG RFP (RFP 14-09) due on March 23 that seeks a consultant to perform an analysis of WMATA's proposed Priority Corridor Network. Mr. Eichler replied that had been issued the week before, and its two primary purposes are to quantify the benefits of implementing the PCN and identify the most effective running-way improvements for implementation along the corridors. Chairman Erenrich suggested that the PCN is already moving forward and inquired as to the relationship between the network under study and the package being proposed. Mr. Eichler replied that the package of bus transit being proposed is a subset of the PCN, and that as the consultant study moves forward, recommendations and strategies from it will inform the process of refining and getting more specific with the proposal. Mr. Harrington added that the stimulus package (ARRA) is pushing ahead, and provides a great opportunity to fund many of the running-way improvements along the PCN.

Mr. Biesiadny suggested that TPB staff would benefit by sitting down with staff of local planning departments to further refine the package. For example, he stated, the inclusion of VA 236 in the network but not VA 7.

Mr. Mokhtari suggested that bus transit service along the Intercounty Connector (ICC) and between Largo and New Carrollton was ready to go and could be included in the network.

Ms. Erickson asked for a larger map, so that specific routes, streets and stop locations could be identified.

When asked about right-of-way acquisition, Mr. Eichler replied that he hoped the priority treatments could be completed within the existing right-of-way, and that NEPA categorical exclusions could be granted for this network.

Chairman Erenrich noted that many organizations throughout the region are discussing bus rapid transit (BRT), and that a regional conference or workshop would be useful.

Mr. Miller stated that the region is in need of a demonstration to the public of what BRT is and how it works.

9. Briefing on Schedule for the FY2010 Transportation/Land Use Connection (TLC) Program

Ms. Crawford provided a brief overview of the timeline for the FY 2010 TLC technical assistance program. She said the project solicitation would open on March 16, 2009, and close on May 18, 2009. She said the TPB would host a pre-application workshop for interested applicants on March 16 at 10:00 a.m. She said the workshop would review the purpose of the TLC program, the application process, and the selection process. She said the TPB would convene the TLC selection panel in June 2009 and that the recommended slate of projects would be tentatively scheduled for approval by the TPB on July 15, 2009.

Referring to the earlier discussion about bus rapid transit (BRT), Mr. Kirby encouraged jurisdictions to think about the possibilities for BRT in their localities as they prepare applications for the TLC program.

10. Status Report on Analysis of 2008 Vehicle Registration Data

Deferred until April.

11. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Analyses

Ms. Lucas reported on updated tailpipe GHG emissions, based on information from a technical memo dated March 6, 2009 from Mr. Sivasailam and Ms. Lucas. Mr. Kirby inquired about the pollutants analyzed in the emissions inventory and she said that currently in addition to CO₂, Nitrous Oxide and Methane have been included and the sum of these pollutants are expressed as CO₂ equivalents. Ms. Lucas also noted that there was a drop in emissions in 2030. Mr. Kirby inquired about milestone years and Ms. Lucas reported that 2002, 2005, 2010, 2020 and 2030 were analysis years. Chairman Erenrich, requested confirmation that Exhibit 6 included only CAFÉ standards and Ms. Lucas confirmed.

Mr. Mokhtari noted if Exhibit 6 shows actual CO₂ emissions in (000,000s) then the Y axis title should be revised to read "Annual Tons", staff concurred with the suggestion. Mr. Ramfos inquired about the shaded areas in Exhibit 7; Mr.

Sivasailam responded that those were reduction measures that have been analyzed.

12. Other Business

None.

13. Adjourn