

# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

### 1. **Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the May 2, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting**

Minutes were approved as written.

### 2. **Briefing on a Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework for Transit Investments in the Washington Region**

Mr. Miller introduced Mr. Behr of HDR-HLB Decision Economics, Inc. He said that Mr. Behr would give a revised and condensed version of the Power Point presentation that Mr. Lewis of HDR-HLB gave the Committee on May 2. He said that Mr. Lewis is scheduled to give this presentation to the TPB Scenario Task Force and the TPB on June 18. Mr. Miller explained that there would be much more time at the task force meeting for the presentation and discussion, and then asked the Committee for comments to help make the presentation as concise and useful as possible for the Board.

Mr. Behr proceeded with the presentation on a comprehensive value assessment of transit investments and explained in detail the three types of economic benefits called: mobility, congestion management, and community economic development. He summarized examples of transit projects that compared the costs with the three types of benefits.

Members asked several questions about the benefits in the three categories, double counting of benefits, and on the case examples. Mr. Behr responded to each and clarified and expanded on the points in the slides.

Mr. Behr responded to questions about the cost-benefit analysis framework being applied to regional and corridor-wide transit investments and how it relates to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Program that uses "cost-per-rider" as the primary measure of the value of transit when funding transit projects.

Members commented that benefit-cost analysis in the past has sometimes been used to limit transit investment and that such analysis should be done for highways as well. Several members suggested that the presentation needs an introduction that explains the context for why the Board is being briefed on benefit-cost assessment. Members also suggested that the presentation needs to be clearer on how the framework could be used in the TPB scenario planning work.

Mr. Miller commented the presentation needs to point out that the comprehensive analysis framework will ensure that all of the economic values of transit investments are considered and not limited to the transit user benefits focused on in the FTA New Starts Program. He said that he and Mr. Kirby would work with Mr. Lewis to revise the presentation based upon the Committee's comments and prepare an introduction to provide a meaningful context for the TPB.

### **3. Briefing on the Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2008 CLRP and FY 2009-2014 TIP with NVTA Funded Projects**

Mr. Clifford distributed two handouts. The first was the summary air quality conformity report. The second was a list showing which projects in the conformity table will be affected if the NVTA funding is not restored.

Mr. Clifford discussed the conformity assessment. He noted that EPA is currently reviewing the 8-hour ozone budgets for adequacy, so they may be legally binding this year. Direct PM<sub>2.5</sub> and Precursor NO<sub>x</sub> emissions budgets have been submitted to EPA by the state air agencies for approval/adequacy review as part of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> state implementation plan (SIP). It is uncertain whether the budgets will be in effect, but they could be, at the time the TPB is scheduled to act on the conformity assessment in July. Accordingly, staff assessed the pollutant levels for each milestone year relative to the new budgets, as well as a comparison to the 2002 base.

Mr. Clifford reviewed the conformity process. He noted that staff was given the notice to proceed in February and that key technical inputs were the same as last year (Cooperative Forecasting round 7.1, Version 2.2 travel demand model, Mobile6.2). He also noted that analysis years included 2009, 2010, 2020, and 2030, and that TERMS were reviewed for use if needed.

Mr. Clifford pointed out that Attachment A shows a list of significant new projects for this year's conformity analysis. He discussed each of the exhibits. He noted that the travel demand results shown in Exhibit 2 are very similar to last year's. He explained that the emissions factors in Exhibits 3 and 4 show that the vehicle fleet is getting cleaner through time. He informed the group that Exhibits 5 through 8 show that the region is within the budgets for ozone season pollutants for both the 1-hour and 8-hour geographies. He noted that Exhibit 9, which lists two pollutants on the same table, shows Direct PM<sub>2.5</sub> in whole numbers and Precursor NO<sub>x</sub> in thousands. He also noted that while the 2009 Precursor NO<sub>x</sub> budget and forecasted level are both shown with a value of 52, it is rounding to thousands that causes this value to be the same. The actual values are 52,052.9 tons/year for the budget and 51,740 tons/year for the forecast total. He mentioned that a footnote would be added to state that fact.

Mr. Sivasailam reminded the group that staff still needs TERMS implementation reports from some of the agencies. Mr. Srikanth asked if staff had Virginia's report. Mr. Sivasailam responded no. Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT would get it right away. Mr. Rawlings said that the District's would be delivered soon also.

Mr. Srikanth asked about the status of EPA's adequacy reviews. Mr. Clifford responded that, for the 8-hour ozone SIP, EPA posted on its website that the comment period was closed, but he was not sure how long it would take EPA to respond to comments and prepare an adequacy finding. Mr. Clifford estimated that the process might be complete in July. Mr. Clifford stated that the PM<sub>2.5</sub> SIP is not yet shown on the website as being under review.

Mr. Owolabi asked if there is a limit on the time for EPA to make an adequacy finding. Mr. Clifford responded that he believed EPA's goal was 90 days after they received the emissions budget documentation, but that, for a new SIP, EPA did not even start the adequacy review until a "completeness determination" is made. He thought that if the completeness determination was not made within six months after being submitted to EPA, that it would automatically be determined to be complete.

Mr. Clifford discussed the second handout, which also provided an introduction to the next agenda item. He noted that the table includes projects that would be affected if the NVTAs funding is not restored. He noted that while some affected projects are in Maryland and the District of Columbia, most are in Virginia. He explained that if the funding is not available for the NVTAs projects as they were submitted for the conformity analysis that the fallback position would be to have the TPB adopt a "conformity-neutral" TIP in July. Staff would then do a new conformity assessment in the Fall. Ms. Erickson asked when the Fall conformity assessment would be completed. Mr. Clifford replied that he expected that draft air quality results would be complete in October and the TPB would be asked to approve the CLRP, TIP, and conformity in November.

Mr. Srikanth noted that while many projects are included in the Virginia portion of the table, they basically only represent a couple of main projects. Mr. Miller stated that the list is only for the Tech Committee, and would not be included in the public comment documents.

**4. Review of Two Versions of the Draft 2008 CLRP and FY 2009-2014 TIP (with and without NVTAs Funded Projects)**

Mr. Austin distributed TIP tables to each agency and requested that they review both the table content and the financial analysis to check for accuracy. He explained that a list had been developed of projects in Virginia that would be removed from the TIP if the NVTAs funding source had not been restored and the TPB was unable to approve a conformity determination. Mr. Srikanth requested that the language introducing that table be clarified to indicate that the projects were not being dropped altogether, but just that funding for some projects may be removed resulting in a delay of completion. Mr. Austin said that a similar list may be necessary for Maryland, and if so, it would be distributed electronically later that day.

**5. Update on the Development of the "CLRP Aspirations" and "What Would it Take" Scenarios**

Ms. Bansal provided an update on the development of the two new scenarios, the CLRP Aspirations and What Would it Take? scenarios. She presented an overview of presentations regarding the scenario study recently given to several different COG committees, namely the COG Climate Change Steering Committee and the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition. The various presentations have elicited many comments and questions, which were presented to the Technical Committee with responses. Comments were taken from past TPB meetings, a memo from five Scenario Study Task Force members to Chairman Michael Knapp, and other meetings at which the current scenario efforts have been presented.

**6. Briefing on Future Metrorail Capacity Needs**

Mr. Harrington gave the Committee a Power Point presentation on a recent WMATA study that presents Metrorail ridership forecasts through 2030 and identifies the system and station capacity needs to address the expected growth. He reviewed the rail system capacity with and without more 75 % 8-car trains by 2015 and 100% 8-car trains by 2020. He summarized the 2010-2020 capacity needs that include buying more 8-car trains, implementing a Blue Line realignment, station connection pedestrian tunnels, more escalators and stairways at core stations, and expanded bus service.

Members asked questions about current and future parking capacity at stations and how it relates to the TPB constraint in the CLRP on core transit ridership that is assumed due to the fiscal constraint requirement. Mr. Harrington explained that the travel demand modeling was not constrained on either parking capacity or in the core. This study indicates that in 2020 the demand would be over capacity in the core and the TPB constrain assumes it is in 2010. He said that WMATA is considering a letter to TPB that would request a change in the year assumed for the ridership constrain. A member commented that this is really a policy decision and that keeping the ridership constraint highlights the need for more transit funding. It was commented that a good near-term response to rail ridership capacity constraints is to increase bus services on key corridors.

Mr. Harrington said that in July the WMATA Board would receive a near-term capital needs and capacity enhancement funding report. He said that he would comeback to the Committee at its next meeting with a briefing that includes expanded bus service for presentation to the TPB on July 16.

## **7. Briefing on Draft Report on Regional Travel Trends**

Mr. Griffiths stated that he had given a Power Point presentation at the last TPB Technical Committee meeting that identified the major findings in the draft Regional Travel Trends Report for the 2000 to 2006 period. These were: (1) The locus growth in the region had shifted to the Outer Suburbs; (2) There was also some resurgence in growth in the Core Area jurisdictions of DC, Arlington and Alexandria and this was a significant change from the previous decade, (3) Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) was still growing faster than population and employment, but at much slower rate than is the past, (4) Overall, VMT declined in the region between 2005 and 2006, but continued to grow in the Outer Suburbs, (5) Growth in weekday transit ridership was increasing at a faster rate than VMT and the data on regional commuting patterns showed a measurable shift from the drive alone and carpooling modes to transit, and (6) Regional travel trends were moving closer to the TPB Vision goals of increased transit use and reduce auto use.

Mr. Rawlings thanked Mr. Griffiths for his presentation and for making the distinction between how regional trends were moving closer toward TPB Vision goals for increased transit use and reduced auto use, but were falling short of TPB Vision goals for more compact growth in the region. He stated that the trend data showing large increases in growth in the Outer Suburbs was not consistent with this TPB Vision goal.

Mr. Griffiths stated that, because of his involvement in the Regional Bus Survey, he and Mr. Kirby had not had the opportunity to discuss the finalization of the Travel Trends Report and when it would be going to the TPB.

## **8. Briefing on the Draft 2008 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report**

Mr. Meese referred to a handout presentation, as well as the draft report included in the mailout package and posted on the Technical Committee Web site. The Draft 2008 Congestion Management Process Technical Report was the third of three major efforts in FY2008 for the CMP, following the CMP Components of the Constrained Long Range Plan (completed in January) and the Congestion Management Documentation Reference Materials for the 2008 Call for Projects (completed in April).

The draft CMP Technical Report was previously reviewed by the Travel Management Subcommittee, the Commuter Connections Subcommittee, and the Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems Technical Subcommittee. It was being presented at today's meeting for review, and was to be brought back to the Committee for finalization at the June 27 meeting.

Mr. Biesiadny complimented the report, and recommended that more information be provided in the report about local jurisdictions' land use strategies for congestion management. Mr. Biesiadny and Mr. Owolabi agreed to provide information about Fairfax County's programs.

Mr. Srikanth noted a recent Virginia state law that requires local jurisdictions' major land development proposals to be reviewed by VDOT to assess impacts to roads.

Mr. Shrestha suggested addition of information on an MDOT-Montgomery County study of the I-270 Corridor.

Ms. Samarasinghe noted the omission of the Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission OmniRide and the Loudoun County Commuter Bus Service from one of the listings in the report of transit services in the region.

Comments on the draft report were requested to be sent to Mr. Meese by June 18.

**9. Briefing on the Draft Report: "2007 Performance of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities on Freeways in the Washington Region"**

Mr. Zilliacus presented an overview of the draft of the 2007 Regional HOV Facilities Monitoring report. Copies of the document were made available and a short handout was distributed. He presented an overview of the history of the HOV lanes in the region, a description of each of the HOV corridors and the type of data and the times that data were collected, and highlighted the findings.

He said that the future activities would include regional HOV monitoring possibly in 2010; and monitoring the impact of change from HOV to HOT lanes in the I-95/I-395 corridor.

The Committee was asked to submit comments by Friday, 20 June 2008.

Mr. Owolabi asked about HOV violations and where hybrid vehicles are counted.

Mr. Zilliacus responded that violations could not be observed directly. This is due in part to the HOV exemptions in Virginia, such as those for vehicles with "clean fuel" tags (e.g. hybrids) and the I-66 exemption for traffic to and from Dulles Airport. He pointed out that counts are only for one day.

Mr. Maslanka asked if hybrid vehicles are counted.

Mr. Zilliacus said they are counted according to observed occupancies. Counting hybrid vehicles has become much more difficult because of the increased diversity of such vehicles.

Mr. Biesiadny asked if transit buses could be included in the summary handout presented.

Mr. Zilliacus said buses are included in the appendix tables of the report , and in Tables #7,#8,# 9 and 10 in the main text of the report.

Ms. Backmon asked when HOV performance data for the recently extended HOV lanes on I-66 between Manassas and Gainesville will be available.

Mr. Zilliacus responded that data would be collected in 2010 as part of the TPB work program. Additionally, annual counts in the Northern Virginia HOV Monitoring Program are available from VDOT by request.

Mr. Ramfos asked about the impact of hybrid/clean fuel vehicles on HOV travel times.

Mr. Zilliacus said that on 95/I-395, in spite of many hybrid vehicles, the travel time savings is still significant. Even on I-66 inside the Beltway, the HOV lanes still save time when compared to the non-HOV alternative.

Mr. Ramfos asked about the apparent decline in HOV travel time advantage on U.S. 50 (John Hanson Highway) and on Va. 267 (Dulles toll Road).

Mr. Zilliacus said that the non-HOV lanes on these generally run fast to very fast. Mr. Sivasailam observed that there is little congestion on the US 50 corridor, except for U.S. 50 east bound east of MD. 704 (Martin Luther King Highway) in the afternoons.

**10. Other Business**

None.

**11. Adjourn**