

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee September 16, 2009 Gail Parker, CAC Vice Chair

The CAC's meeting on September 10 included a briefing on the TPB's TIGER grant application and a discussion about how to improve the documentation for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Committee also discussed its draft recommendation for the development of a regional transportation priorities plan.

Follow-up on CAC Concerns Regarding Information in the TIP

At the TPB's forum on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) this past June, CAC members raised concerns about the lack of information in the TIP regarding bicycle and pedestrian projects. In the case of Virginia, the TIP seemed to indicate that there was no funding provided for bike/ped projects. State DOT representatives responded that many transportation projects have bicycle and pedestrian components, but these elements are difficult to separate out from the entire project.

The issue was further raised during public comment periods at TPB meetings in June and July. At the July 15 meeting, ~~during the approval of the FY2010-15 TIP, TPB member Christopher Zimmerman added an amendment~~ the TPB approved an amendment directing staff to include information on bicycle projects and provide information on funding levels for those projects where possible. This amendment was introduced by TPB member Christopher Zimmerman.¹

Andrew Austin of the COG/TPB staff spoke to the CAC at the September 10 meeting about this issue. He briefed the committee on new information, included in the newest TIP document, describing projects that are specifically identified as bike/ped projects and the numbers of projects that are listed in the TIP as including "bicycle/pedestrian accommodations." Mr. Austin said this information was included in this year's TIP based upon data that is currently available. He said that for future TIP documents, staff will seek to obtain more extensive data on bike/ped programming from the DOTs and other implementing agencies.

While acknowledging that the new information in the TIP was a step forward, ***the CAC asked that TPB staff continue to work with the TPB's Bike/Ped Subcommittee and with the DOTs to determine the best way for generating and presenting information*** that would include: 1) lists and descriptions of bicycle and pedestrian projects, and 2) funding levels being provided for bike/ped projects or project components.

Specific comments and questions included the following:

¹ At the TPB meeting on September 16, Mr. Zimmerman requested this technical clarification in the CAC report, noting that he, as a TPB member, does not have the power to add an amendment. He further emphasized that this was an amendment approved by the entire TPB, not simply "added" by himself as an individual.

- 1 ***There are two types of bike/ped projects and better information is needed on both:*** 1) stand-alone projects, such as a trail project, and 2) projects that have a level of bike/ped accommodation -- essentially meeting a “complete streets” standard.
- 1 ***How do Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in other regions of the country provide information on bike/ped projects and funding?*** There may be other models to consider as the TPB seeks to enhance this information and documentation.
- 2 ***The goal of this exercise is not to create more bureaucratic requirements.*** In fact, members emphasized that this information is needed so that planners and the public can understand how the region is performing in its ongoing efforts to improve bike/ped access and facilities.
- 3 ***The need for better information is bigger than the need to track bike/ped funding.*** Members said the entire transportation network laid out in the CLRP and TIP, not just bike/ped projects, should be better explained. TPB staff agreed with this suggestion and said that perhaps the TIP document is not the best method for providing this kind of information. Staff suggested that members of the CAC and staff should work together in reviewing the TIP brochure, which was first developed last fall, to determine how it might be enhanced to provide more big-picture, citizen-friendly information.

Presentation and Discussion on the TIGER Grant

Darren Smith of the TPB staff gave a presentation on the TIGER grant application. CAC members were particularly interested in how the TIGER grant package of projects is linked to the wider network of priority bus projects identified in the Scenario Study’s Aspirations Scenario. TPB staff responded that the development of the TIGER package and the Aspirations Scenario are linked because both would promote priority bus projects that could be implemented relatively quickly. However, staff noted that the TIGER projects were required to be ready for implementation by 2012, which would not hold true for the projects in the Aspirations Scenario. In addition, the Aspirations Scenario would use an extensive network of new variably priced lanes, which were not included in the TIGER grant proposal.

CAC members noted the importance of completing analysis of the Aspirations Scenario as soon as possible.

Discussion Regarding the CAC’s Draft Recommendations Urging the TPB to Develop a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

The CAC discussed its draft recommendations document calling for the TPB to develop a new type of regional long-range plan that would:

- focus on collaborative regional solutions,
- use the scenario study to tie the long-range plan to the TPB Vision
- identify long-range, unfunded priorities,
- include rail and trail projects,

- improve transparency of projects funded for citizens, and
- yield a plan more responsive to the needs of our citizens and communities.

CAC Chairman Farrell Keough told the committee that he had been invited to discuss the draft recommendations with the TPB Technical Committee the previous week. He noted that the Technical Committee had not favorably received his presentation.

The committee decided to delay final presentation of the recommendations until the October TPB meeting. The committee also spent considerable time discussing how their recommendations might best be presented so that TPB members might be most receptive to them.

Other Business

- John Swanson and Andrew Austin of the TPB staff briefed the committee on the upcoming TPB agenda. A CAC member asked whether the TPB had measured the regional impact of the ARRA (federal stimulus) projects and whether they had been derived from a list of regional priorities. Staff responded that the ARRA projects had been taken from previously programmed projects and that the projects were chosen because they were shovel-ready and would provide a rapid economic boost.
- The CAC discussed their upcoming fall agenda which includes a public forum on October 15 to launch the CLRP/TIP and a special meeting on November 12 in Virginia.
- Staff announced that the next session of the TPB's Community Leadership Institute, which will be held on October 29 and 31, will be open to any CAC members who wish to attend.
- TPB officers are in the process of filling two vacancies on the CAC – one in Maryland and one in D.C.
- New TPB staff member, Deb Bilek, was introduced.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Meeting, September 10, 2009

Members in Attendance

1. Farrell Keough, MD, Chair
2. Maureen Budetti, VA
3. Harold Foster, DC
4. Bill Klenke, MD
5. Larry Martin, DC
6. Allen Muchnick, VA
7. Jim Larsen, VA
8. Gail Parker, VA
9. Lynn Shanton, MD
10. Emmet Tydings, MD
11. Shirley Williams, DC

Members Not in Attendance

1. Roland Gunn, VA
2. Trudy Reeves, DC

Staff/Others

John Swanson, COG/DTP
 Darren Smith, COG/DTP
 Deb Bilek, COG/DTP
 Bill Orleans