

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Robert Werth
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SUBJECT: TPB Annual Transit Forum Overview

DATE: June 8, 2011

The 22nd Annual Transit Forum was held on May 24, 2011. The purpose of the annual transit forum is to bring together representatives from the private transportation sector and local jurisdictions to discuss mutual regional transportation interests. Over 40 persons attended, including representatives from local jurisdictions, public bus operators, and fourteen private transportation providers or manufacturers. The agenda featured three main items: a keynote address, an update on the TPB's activities, and then a roundtable discussion among the attendees.

This year's keynote address was given by Mr. Dennis Cannon who discussed the issue of the growing size of mobility devices and implications for transit and taxi vehicles. Mr. Cannon served as key staff to the US Access Board from 1981 to 2010 and developed ADA accessibility guidelines for vehicles, the public right-of-way, and electronic and information technology standards. In his address, Mr. Cannon discussed the revised guidelines on making vehicles ADA accessible which are expected to be issued soon by the Access Board, and will then be taken up by USDOT through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. He emphasized that the guidelines can only apply to vehicles and what type of mobility devices they should make allowances for, not to the design of the mobility devices themselves, and that the original guidelines are out of date given current mobility device size, weight, number of wheels, turning radius, and other factors. An intensive question-and-answer period followed, with much discussion of how transportation providers can best meet the needs of customers who use mobility devices.

Ms. Wendy Klancher, TPB staff, provided an update on the activities of the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, including an overview of the types of projects funded by the TPB under the FTA's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs. TPB is conducting a study to assess the TPB's program and projects, which will inform future efforts. Ms. Klancher highlighted the DC Accessible Taxi Project, which has placed twenty accessible cabs on the streets of DC in the last few months.

The forum concluded with the roundtable discussion of transit plans and prospects. Each jurisdiction and transit operator in turn highlighted recent events and upcoming plans and projects for public transportation. In particular, potential business opportunities for the private sector were discussed.

The meeting highlights and a list of attendees are available on the Task Force website:

http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/committee/documents.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=101