

Linking Conservation and Transportation Planning in the Washington DC Region

As of 2007, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is federally required to engage and consult with affected land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation state and local agencies regarding the development of the long-range transportation plan (CLRP). In compliance with these regulations, an initial consultation meeting with transportation and environmental agencies was conducted in March 2008 to create a foundation for ongoing consultation and knowledge sharing regarding environmental issues on a regional, system-wide scale (see: www.mwcog.org/clrp/elements/environment). FHWA and the TPB will co-host the upcoming workshop on November, 9 2009, which will build upon the work of this initial meeting.

Workshop Objectives:

- To provide an update on progress since the March 2008 environmental consultation and mitigation workshop
- To discuss examples of advance mitigation banks in other areas
- To create a structure and process to promote meaningful environmental mitigation opportunities in the region
- To develop a process to maintain long term coordination between transportation and environmental resource agencies

When: Monday, Nov. 9, 2009
9:30 am - 5:00 pm

Where: COG Training Center

Hosted by: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) &
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

RSVP: rhodgson@mwcog.org
(or questions)

Workshop Draft Agenda:

- 9:30 am** Registration
- 10:00 am** Overview of Workshop,
and National & Local Perspective
FHWA staff/TPB Representative
- 10:10 am** Introduction to Success in
Advanced Mitigation in Other Areas
FHWA staff/MD DNR staff
- 10:30 am** Discussion of Regional Transportation and
Environmental Goals Important to Participants
FHWA expert consultant
- 11:30 am** Lunch
- 12:30 pm** Discussion of Data and Analytical Tools
FHWA expert consultant/TPB staff
- 1:30 pm** Discussion on What is Needed to Make
Advanced Mitigation Successful
Group discussion
- 3:00 pm** Break
- 3:15 pm** Identification of Advanced Mitigation
Opportunities/Strategies/Obstacles
Small group discussion
- 4:00 pm** Identification of Next Steps for Advanced
Mitigation Opportunities
FHWA expert consultant
- 4:45 pm** Meeting Wrap Up

Summary and Outcomes of the March 2008 TPB Environmental Consultation Workshop

In TPB's second consultation effort, state resources agencies and state and local transportation agencies were invited to participate in a meeting to review the outcomes of the previous consultation effort, learn about how other regions are responding to the new environmental consultation requirements and discuss what would be the most helpful way to move forward in the National Capital Region.

- Both transportation and environmental planners said it would be helpful to take the mapping further to show where highly sensitive or avoidance areas are located, as well as areas that are in need of restoration and conservation. Also, they felt that it would be helpful to update the maps on a regular basis.
- Environmental agencies emphasized that the earlier that possible conflicts and impacts for potential transportation projects are considered, the more cost effective and efficient the possible solutions may be.
- Opportunities for "meaningful mitigation" should be identified and pursued. Instead of transportation projects focusing their limited mitigation resources on small restoration projects, those mitigation resources should be pooled to implement larger mitigation projects that will result in greater net environmental benefits.

more information: www.mwcog.org/clrp/elements/environment

From 23 C.F.R. §450.322 Final Rule

§450.322 Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.

...(f) The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include:

...(7) A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation;

...(g) The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate:

- (1) Comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or
- (2) Comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.