

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the June 6, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting

Minutes were approved as written.

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

Mr. Clifford noted that the final version of the summary conformity report was included in the mailout. He said that there were very few changes from the draft that was discussed at the last meeting. He mentioned that the report was released for public comment at the TPB CAC meeting on June 12th, and that the public comment period closes on July 12th. Mr. Clifford stated that he presented the conformity results at yesterday's meeting of MWAQC's conformity subcommittee, and that he expects a comment letter on the analysis from MWAQC.

Mr. Clifford said that he does not expect either the 8-hour ozone or PM2.5 mobile budgets to be found adequate in time to use them in this conformity analysis. He said that he spoke to Martin Kotsch, EPA's Region III representative, to get a report on the status of the SIP's mobile budget approvals. Mr. Kotsch said that the 8-hour ozone adequacy review is almost complete, and should be in the Federal Register within 60 days. The PM2.5 SIP, however, is not yet even on his desk for review. Mr. Clifford stated that this is not a problem for the TPB approval in July, since prior conformity criteria are in effect and have been met.

Mr. Clifford noted that a larger issue for conformity is the NVTA funding discussion going on in the current legislative session. He reminded the group that a fallback plan is in place for an approval of a conformity neutral TIP in July.

Mr. Kirby asked if Mr. Clifford expected that MWAQC's comments would be positive. Mr. Clifford responded that he did, since the results are so similar to last year's.

3. Briefing on Two Versions of the Draft 2008 CLRP and FY 2009-2014 TIP (with and without NVTA Funded Projects)

Mr. Austin spoke to the draft TIP document. He stated that a list of eight projects had been identified to drop from the FY 2009-2014 TIP if NVTA funding had not been restored. Ms. Sorenson reported that she did not have any further information to report on the Virginia legislature's efforts to restore funding. At the July 16th meeting the TPB would be asked to approve the full TIP along with the conformity analysis if funding had been reinstated for those projects. Otherwise, the TPB would be asked to approve a "conformity-neutral" TIP so that state agencies would be able to produce a STIP in order to avoid a conformity-lapse. If a conformity-neutral TIP were to be adopted, then TPB staff will immediately begin work on an alternate conformity determination that includes most all of the same projects, but on a delayed schedule. This conformity analysis would be released in October and approved in November along with a revised FY 2009-2014 TIP.

4. Briefing on the Report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Study Commission and Potential TPB Initiatives for the Reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act

Before discussing the policy and study commission report, Mr. Kirby distributed a page listing a number of recommendations and proposed transportation strategies to reduce greenhouse gases which was included in the draft report of the COG Climate Change Steering Committee. The report was scheduled to be released by the COG Board of Directors for public comment on July 9. He said that the report will be on the September Technical Committee and TPB agendas.

He reviewed the list of strategies and suggested that the draft recommendation to develop a regional conformity process for greenhouse gasses raises issues that TPB could comment on because the current air quality conformity process is quite time consuming and affects the TIP process. He pointed out that the challenge in reducing future CO₂ emissions is global, unlike NO_x and VOC emissions which have regional health impacts. He said that EPA is also expected shortly to issue a notice asking how it should regulate greenhouse gases and suggested that TPB consider responding to the notice.

Mr. Erenrich asked if analysis so far has identified how much transit mode share would have to change to meet the climate change goals in the report. Mr. Kirby replied that in the TPB's "What Would It Take" scenario analysis, we are looking at a goal of 20 percent reduction from 2005 levels in CO₂ emissions by 2020 and a 40 percent reduction by 2030. He said that transit will contribute a small part, and all of the strategies together will be necessary to begin to achieve such large reductions. He explained that the total costs for meeting greenhouse gas reduction goals must be examined carefully. In the transportation sector, the most cost-effective reduction strategies should be identified and commitments should not be made to strategies that appear to be effective without looking at the full costs.

Chairman Rawlings inquired if green house gas analysis activities are in the UPWP. Mr. Clifford said that they were included in the new FY 2009 UPWP.

The Committee recommended that staff develop comments on the transportation recommendations in the draft COG Climate Change report for consideration by the TPB in September.

Mr. Kirby then distributed a memo to the Committee on a number of current initiatives for the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program. He highlighted the major changes to the current federal transportation programs proposed by the Commission established in SAFETEA-LU. The Policy Study Commission examined the current condition and future needs of the surface transportation system, and developed recommendations regarding Federal polices, new revenues sources and legislative changes.

He summarized the main funding issues raised in the Interim Report of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, described the transportation implications in recent proposed infrastructure banking legislation, and the transportation funding impacts in the proposed climate change legislation that was

rejected recently by Congress. He also highlighted the recommendations in the recent US DOT proposals for reauthorization and summarized the three goals for national priorities he presented on behalf of AMPO in testimony to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

He concluded by reviewing the common themes from the Policy and Study Commission report and the other initiatives that could guide the restructuring of the federal programs.

Ms. Erickson asked how a restructured program addressing metropolitan area congestion would work in a three-state area like Washington. Mr. Kirby said that there are 30 multi-state MPOs in the country. One approach would be to have a designated recipient for such a new metropolitan program like was established in SAFETEA-LU for the JARC and New Freedom transit programs. The recipient could be the MPO, transit agency or a new agency set up to administer the federal program.

5. Briefing on a Proposed Metrobus Priority Corridor Network

Mr. Hamre gave a 20-slide PowerPoint that was recently presented to the WMATA Board of Directors on a proposal for a regional network of priority bus corridors to improve services in the next five years for half of Metrobus riders. He concluded by referring to the table listing the recommended 24 priority corridors in the network.

Mr. Mokhtari inquired about changing the priorities, specifically how to move up the last corridor on the list: Rhode Island Avenue to Laurel. Mr. Hamre said that such a change would require identifying which other corridors should be moved down.

Mr. Erenrich said that it was a good presentation and the program will have a big payoff for the region. He suggested that WMATA work with the TPB and the MOITS Committee and local jurisdictions to develop a regional statement to improve traffic flow on these priority corridors.

Mr. Hamre said that WMATA will be developing policies on bus operations and traffic signal priorities that the region could consider. Mr. Kirby suggested that WMATA staff present these policies to the Regional Bus Subcommittee and MOITS, then to the Technical Committee and TPB in September or October.

Mr. Smith commented that Loudoun County and WMATA have had big increases in bus ridership recently. He said he was concerned that future transit ridership is constrained in the TPB travel demand model.

Mr. Kirby replied that it is desirable to remove the transit demand constraint in the travel model as soon as possible, but adequate Metro funding remains to be identified. He said that the WMATA staff presentation at the June 6 Technical Committee meeting addressed future Metrorail capacity needs. Once WMATA has identified the funding to address these needs, a presentation could go the Technical Committee and TPB in September or October.

6. Update on the Development of the “CLRP Aspirations” and “What Would It Take” Scenarios

Mr. Kirby provided an update on the development of the two new scenarios, the “CLRP Aspirations” and “What Would it Take?” scenarios. He went over three different PowerPoint presentations, all of which were presented to the TPB Scenario Study Task Force at its June 18 meeting. The first presentation included an overview of the first version of the land use component of the “CLRP Aspirations” scenario, which was based entirely on the land use growth shifts from the previous RMAS study. The second presentation focused on a proposed transit and value-priced lanes network for the transportation component of the scenario. This included a layering of CLRP projects, RMAS projects, local plans, value priced lanes, and a new rapid bus network. The third presentation focused on development of the “sliders” for the “What Would it Take?” scenario. Initial analysis on CO2 reduction capabilities and goals for fuel efficiency, alternative fuels, and VMT reduction were presented.

There was discussion regarding the development of the transportation and land use components of the CLRP Aspirations scenario separately. It was stated that the components are being developed in an iterative process based on one another. For instance, the creation of more dense activity centers would necessitate higher quality bus service. There was also discussion of unofficially updating the activity centers within the context of the scenario development, possibly including the reevaluation of current activity centers and the addition of new centers, such as Wheaton.

7. Update on the Draft 2008 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report

Mr. Meese referred to the final draft report included in the mailout package. The Draft 2008 Congestion Management Process (CMP) 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). Today's presentation followed up on the full presentation of the draft report at the June 6 meeting. The comment period was through June 18. Staff updated the draft report based upon several comments received, including revising descriptions of Loudoun County Transit and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission services; adding examples of local jurisdictional land use-transportation strategies, including language provided by Fairfax County; updating the map and listing of TPB member jurisdictions; and making minor editorial changes throughout the document. No further comments were received on the final draft report at today's meeting, enabling the report to be finalized.

8. Update on Transportation Safety Activities

Mr. Farrell spoke to the mailout item. The April 29 Pedestrian Safety workshop, held at the National Press Club, produced a set of recommendations, which were incorporated into a COG Board resolution, adopted on June 11. A key recommendation was the enhancement of regional transportation safety efforts, including the Street Smart

program. The COG Board requested that TPB staff produce a follow-up work program to implement the recommendations in this resolution.

Mr. Kirby noted that the Street Smart program required the help of the COG Police Chiefs Committee, to provide the enforcement part of the program.

9. Other Business

None.

10. Adjourn