

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the December 5 Technical Committee Meeting**

Minutes were approved as written.

### **2. Update on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2009 CLRP and FT 2010-2015 TIP**

Mr. Austin distributed copies of the Inputs to the air quality conformity analysis of the 2009 CLRP and FY 2009-2014 TIP that had been prepared by Ms. Posey. The inputs reflected updates received from almost every agency. He noted that Prince George's County had submitted a few updates that hadn't yet been incorporated and that Frederick County might have some further updates to make. The changes to the CLRP and TIP were scheduled to be released for public comment at the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday, January 15.

Mr. Austin briefly outlined the changes that had been received. These included date changes from the DDOT and MDOT/SHA, and further date changes with a few project deletions from Montgomery County. Changes from VDOT included modifications to the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes project and modifications and a delay to the I-95/395 HOV/HOT/Bus Lanes project. Only minor date changes were received for transit projects.

The table of inputs only reflects projects that would be modeled for air quality conformity analysis. The TIP contains many more projects and that will be updated in the upcoming months.

Mr. Austin requested that any edits or corrections to the inputs table be submitted to COG by the close of business on Tuesday, January 13.

### **3. Update on Draft Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP**

Ms. Posey distributed two items and mentioned that a third item, the draft Scope of Work, was included in the mailout. She first briefly discussed the single page email from Ms. Jackson of USDOT. She explained that the email referenced new joint EPA / USDOT guidance on the 2004 conformity regulations. Ms. Jackson's email included links to the guidance document. Ms. Posey noted that one of the specifics mentioned in the guidance is that the regulations now allow a conformity determination to be based on the latest planning assumptions in place at the time the conformity analysis begins, rather than at the time of USDOT's approval.

Ms. Posey next discussed the work scope. She noted that the scope was presented at last month's TPB and MWAQC TAC meetings, and that the document had not been changed other than a revision to the date of the January TPB meeting on the schedule. She reminded the group that staff specifically requested a review of the technical assumptions in the analysis relating to the conversion of all HOV facilities to HOV3+ in 2010, and to the use of transit constraint, with 2010 capacity constraining future years. She asked that changes be made, in writing, during the public comment process.

At the December Committee meeting Ms. Posey had asked for a review of detailed coding assumptions for transit projects in the CLRP. The group asked for something to respond to. Ms. Posey's third item for discussion was a listing of transit coding details. She mentioned that specific bus routing was not listed. She noted that she listed the source data for most assumptions, and that those projects without source information, except for the Anacostia Rail, have assumptions that are at least five years old. She asked for comments/changes by the February 6<sup>th</sup> Tech Committee meeting.

Ms. Erickson mentioned that Maryland will probably suggest changing facilities to HOV3+ in 2020.

Chairman Erenrich asked for confirmation that feedback for the transit details was requested by February 6<sup>th</sup>, while updates to HOV3 and transit constraint assumptions were requested during the public comment process. Ms. Posey replied that was correct.

Mr. Kirby asked if everyone was comfortable with the schedule. Mr. Srikanth responded that the information is the most up-to-date available, and that while additional funding cuts are possible, the changes will probably be to push projects back between the 2010 and 2020 timeframe, so they might not affect conformity. He stated that he was still comfortable with going ahead with the current schedule. Ms. Erickson said that most cuts will likely affect system preservation projects, and so should not affect conformity.

Chairman Erenrich asked how cuts in transit service in June or July would affect the conformity analysis. Ms. Posey replied that the conformity regulations allow for minor transit service changes without affecting a conformity analysis. Mr. Erenrich said that the changes would likely not be minor. Ms. Erickson suggested that these would be changes that had been made after the inputs were approved, and that they should be in the next analysis. Mr. Srikanth agreed.

#### **4. Briefing on EPA's Proposed Inclusion of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in the Baltimore Nonattainment Area for the 2006 24-Hour Fine Particulates (PM 2.5) Standard**

Mr. Clifford discussed six mailout items. The first was an August 18, 2008 EPA letter to Governor Martin O'Malley. In the letter EPA states that the Washington, DC area is in attainment of the 2006 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard. The second item was a December 5, 2008 EPA letter to Governor O'Malley reversing the original

decision, and proposing to include Montgomery and Prince George's counties in the Baltimore PM<sub>2.5</sub> non-attainment area. Both letters were discussed at the December MWAQC meeting. The third item was a letter from MWAQC to TPB, alerting TPB to the proposed EPA action, and warning of significant consequences for TPB's air quality planning processes. The fourth item was an email from Mr. King transmitting information to MWAQC TAC from EPA Region III relating to possible options for dealing with transportation planning under the possible new area designations. The fifth item was a memo from Mr. Kotsch summarizing conformity requirements should the proposed 2006 PM<sub>2.5</sub> designations become finalized. Mr. Clifford reviewed the memo, describing the three listed phases of conformity analysis. The initial conformity assessment would be one analysis for the whole Baltimore / Washington area. Both regions would have to coordinate, and would have one year to complete the analysis. The second phase would allow some independence between the two regions, but problems could arise if either region needed to make changes to their conformity analysis. The third phase, after SIP budgets are established, would allow for even more independence between the two regions.

The last item discussed by Mr. Clifford was a compilation of questions for EPA developed by stakeholders in the Washington region relating to this proposal. Mr. Clifford noted that TPB, COG, and MWAQC are working on a joint comment letter to EPA. Comments are due by February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Chairman Erenrich asked if TPB staff had spoken to the Baltimore MPO. Mr. Clifford replied that he had spoken with BMC staff, and that BMC was also planning on sending a comment letter to EPA, but not with the same urgency as the Washington Region. Ms. Erickson mentioned that she had spoken to Mr. Simons, and that he was not sure that BMC was going to send a comment letter. She said that Baltimore was not as concerned with the situation as was the Washington region.

Mr. Clifford asked Ms. Rohlfs to comment. Ms. Rohlfs mentioned that the proposed joint MWAQC/TPB/COG Board letter would be discussed at the upcoming January 12<sup>th</sup> MWAQC TAC meeting, but that there are differing opinions from each of the jurisdictions about what the letter should say. Maryland and DC representatives feel that the letter should recommend that the whole region be defined as in non-attainment, while Virginia representatives generally disagree, citing the clean monitor data as a reason for the region to be declared in attainment.

Ms. Rohlfs described the two successive EPA proposals. The first was the original (August 18<sup>th</sup>) letter, declaring the whole Washington region as in attainment. The second was to include Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Baltimore's non-attainment area. She said that EPA prepared the 2<sup>nd</sup> proposal following a comment letter from four environmental groups. The comment letter claimed that areas contributing to non-attainment should be in non-attainment, too. Ms. Rohlfs noted that the Baltimore monitor readings are not very high above the new standard.

Ms. Rohlfs said that the current recommendations in the region's comment letter are to either make the whole region be in attainment, or to have Montgomery and Prince George's counties be a sub-area in our region. She informed the group that there is currently a proposal to disapprove Baltimore's Ozone SIP. Ms.

Rohlfs spoke to Ms. Katz, the air director of EPA's Region III, and Ms. Katz believes that DC's and Virginia's transportation projects would not be affected by Baltimore's SIP disapproval, but Ms. Rohlfs is not convinced of the accuracy of that. Ms. Rohlfs noted that Mr. Kotsch and a representative from Ms. Katz's office would be at the MWAQC TAC meeting on Monday. She invited everyone to attend.

Mr. Biesiadny asked about the timeline of events. Ms. Rohlfs responded that April 6<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for a final designation. She had been informed by Ms. Katz that there is no flexibility in that schedule.

Mr. Biesiadny asked if the region had one year after the designation to develop a SIP. Ms. Rohlfs answered that there are three years until a completed SIP is required, but that subregional budgets could be developed much more quickly. Mr. Erenrich asked who does the budgets. Ms. Rohlfs replied that they are MDE's responsibility.

Mr. Srikanth encouraged everyone to read Mr. Kotsch's memo. He noted that the region would have one year after the April 6<sup>th</sup> designation to complete a conformity analysis. Mr. Clifford agreed that there would be one year to complete a conformity analysis, but that subregional budgets would require a SIP development.

Mr. Srikanth asked if we could use interim tests, and have a single combined analysis with Baltimore. Mr. Kirby replied that we should have separate budgets, but that even with separate budgets, both regions would have to conform in order for either to be in attainment. He told Ms. Rohlfs that the joint comment letter could include another proposal if appropriate, even if the process has to take more time.

Chairman Erenrich recommended that everyone attend the January 12th MWAQC TAC meeting.

## **5. Briefing on Proposed Criteria and Process for Prioritizing Stimulus-related Transportation Projects**

At the December 17 meeting, the TPB directed the Steering Committee to propose criteria for prioritizing stimulus-related transportation projects in the Washington region, as well as the best structure and process for TPB to influence stimulus-related funding. In addition, the Scenario Task Force was directed to report back to the TPB with a prioritized list of new major regional transportation projects to be considered, circumstances permitting.

Mr. Kirby distributed a memorandum to the Committee on activities to date on these topics. He also distributed a copy of a letter that was transmitted to the Congressional Delegation and state leadership requesting that the stimulus package must reflect fair and equitable distribution to metropolitan areas and at a minimum, the distribution should reflect the STP percentage allocated to metropolitan areas of 35 percent.

Mr. Kirby reviewed the proposed criteria for prioritizing the transportation projects, highlighting that they must be “ready to go” and that the existing TIP and STIP process will be used to govern the project selection process. He suggested that the DOTs and WMATA could give a status report on the project selection process to the TPB on January 28.

Committee members asked several clarifying questions and provided comments on the selection criteria in the memorandum. Mr. Kirby said he would add to the proposed criteria that capacity projects that are in the TIP could be selected for funding. Ms. Erickson explained that FHWA is giving a lot of directions to the DOTs about being ready to go and included in the TIP and STIP. She said that due to the state budget cuts that will reduce project funding in Maryland, the federal dollars will not even make up the gap.

Mr. Kirby then reviewed the response in the memorandum to the direction that the Scenario Task Force report back to the TPB with a prioritized list of new major regional transportation projects to be considered. He explained that the task force is currently working on two transportation and land use scenarios with the results expected in July 2009. These scenarios will help provide input for the 2010 CLRP update process which begins in the fall. Thus, the task force is not in a position to provide a prioritized list based upon this ongoing work at the January 28 TPB meeting. He suggested that one response would be to point out that the scenarios rely on the implementation of transit projects in the 2008 CLRP as well as projects such as the Purple Line in Maryland that are not in the CLRP. With the current budget cuts facing the states, one priority could be to focus new funding on ensuring that these baseline projects can be implemented as first steps for developing new projects under the scenario study for future CLRP updates.

## **6. Review of Outline and Preliminary Budget for FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Miller distributed a memorandum with a preliminary budget and an outline for the UPWP for FY 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). He reviewed the overall budget estimates and said that at this point there is considerable uncertainty. He explained that it is assumed that the FY 2010 funding allocation to be provided by MDOT will be the same as the current FY 2009 level. For MDOT, the current FY 2009 FHWA funding level reflects a federal rescission of FHWA funds as required under the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. For DDOT and VDOT, he said that it is assumed the FY 2010 FHWA funding level will be reduced 11 percent from the FY 2009 level to reflect the federal rescission. In addition, he said that the budget estimate assumes that about \$1,600,000 of unobligated funds from FY 2008 will be available. With these assumptions, the total preliminary budget estimate for FY 2010 is the same as the current FY 2009 budget level of \$10,858,000.

Mr. Miller commented that if the final federal and state allocations of new FY 2010 funding from the DOTs are received after March, the funds that are different than the assumed totals in the current budget can be allocated to specific

projects and approved by a formal amendment. He said that the first draft of the full document will be presented to the TPB at its February 18 meeting, and noted that the technical assistance programs for the DOTs and WMATA remain to be specified. He said that the TPB will be asked to adopt the program on March 18 and then it will be submitted to FHWA and FTA for their approval by July 1.

Mr. Miller reviewed the work tasks with proposed funding changes from FY 2009 levels as summarized in the table in his memorandum. Mr. Griffiths explained the proposed funding changes in the Household Travel Survey, GIS Technical Support and Coordinated Cooperative Forecasting work activities. Mr. Meese explained the proposed funding changes in the Management, Operations, and ITS Planning and Freight Planning work activities.

**7. Briefing on the Initial Findings from the 2007/2008 Household Travel Survey**

Mr. Griffiths gave a Power Point presentation highlighting some of the initial results from the 2007/2008 Household Travel Survey. He stated that he would be briefing the TPB on some of the initial survey findings at their January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**8. Report on Applications Received for the Transportation/Land Use Connection (TLC) Program**

Ms. Crawford presented a brief description of the applications received by the TPB for the FY 2009 round of technical assistance under the TLC Program. The TLC program received 15 applications: one from the District of Columbia, nine from Maryland jurisdictions, and five from Virginia jurisdictions. She said the applications represented a diversity of projects from both inner and outer jurisdictions, as well as a variety of project topics.

She said that the TPB has budgeted \$180,000 for technical assistance and MDOT has contributed an additional \$80,000 from its technical assistance account for projects. She explained that the Selection Panel will meet on January 27, 2009, to discuss the projects and provide a ranked listing of project recommendations. The Selection Panel is composed of representatives from the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and the Transportation Research Board, and is chaired by Ms. Koster of the National Capital Planning Commission, a non-voting member of the TPB. MDOT will review the Selection Panel's recommendations and select projects to be funded through their contribution. She said that the remaining projects will then be selected by rank and forwarded to the TPB for approval in February. The Technical Committee will receive an update on this process at its February 6, 2009, meeting.

**9. FY2009 Models Development Consultant Task Order Research**

Mr. Hogan stated that the TPB in recent years had maintained a task order consulting contract to perform a scan of best modeling practices across the U.S. This arrangement has been especially valuable because it has informed TPB

about the state of the practice while enabling staff to save resources that otherwise would have been spent by staff conducting independent research. Through competitive bidding, a new task order contract was negotiated with Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (CSI) for FY-2009. As part of the contract, CSI attends meetings of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee and provides written guidance to TPB staff on specific models development issues raised at these meetings or other forums.

In response to specific issues raised by TPB staff, CSI is presently engaged in three task orders:

- Investigating the use of fuel prices in travel models;
- Recommending an approach to near-term model enhancements; and
- Constructing a framework for “before” and “after” study of HOV network effects due to new HOT lanes.

Preliminary results of this research were presented at the November 21, 2008 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee meeting. CSI received comments from this presentation and will be addressing them in updated materials scheduled for completion in January. The full set of draft materials is posted on the COG website, under TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee November 21, 2008 meeting documents.

Given the recent volatility in gasoline prices during 2008, first climbing to record highs in summer, then declining precipitously by the end of the year, Mr. Hogan gave a summary presentation of the information CSI had prepared for this task order.

There has been growing attention on the implications of higher prices on travel behavior, particularly as prices approached four dollars per gallon in 2008. Accompanying the rise in gasoline prices have been reports of increased transit ridership and decreased vehicle miles of travel. In addition, increasingly, the users of travel forecasts are asking questions about the imbedded assumptions pertaining to fuel prices. There is, therefore, a compelling reason to review how other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are addressing the rapid change in fuel prices in their modeling activities, including assumptions being used for conformity analysis.

There are a number of dimensions to this topic, including: potential demand responses to fuel price increases; viability of modeling long-term impacts; and modeling approaches. Among the potential traveler responses: changes in land use patterns, trip / activity generation rates, and distribution of trip / activity locations, mode choice, vehicle choice, and vehicle fuel efficiency. Some of these would be observable in the short term, while others are longer-term impacts. Among the key challenges to modeling: data, different responses by different market segments, forecasting fuel prices.

The major findings of this research are as follows:

- Fuel prices are too unpredictable to forecast;

- Insufficient data exists to model behavioral responses to fuel price increases; and
- The key to any modeling approach is to identify and account for the uncertainty involved, to develop a spectrum of future forecasts based on different forecast scenarios, and to acknowledge the limitations of the forecasts.

Mr. Hogan indicated that staff would be reviewing and commenting on the draft reports prepared under each of these task orders. This work is ongoing at this time.

#### 10. **Briefing on the 2007 Washington-Baltimore Regional Air Passenger Survey**

Mr. Canan briefed the Committee on the 2007 Washington-Baltimore Regional Air Passenger Survey (APS). The briefing included (1) an overview of the COG/TPB's Continuous Air Systems Planning (CASP) program, (2) the findings from the 2007 APS, and (3) a brief explanation on how APS data, along with other data, are used to prepare ground access forecasts in the regional transportation planning process.

In terms of overall findings, Mr. Canan reported that 685 flights accounting for 33 airlines and 114 destinations were surveyed in the fall of 2007 at the region's three large commercial airports. The airports include (1) Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport (BWI), (2) Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), and (3) Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD). These surveyed flights resulted in a highly-favorable overall response rate of 49 percent for the APS.

Key findings of the survey included:

*Annual enplanements:* 32 million air passenger enplanements occurred regionally in 2007, three-quarters of which were locally-originating passengers—an increase of 4 million from 2002.

*Airport choice:* The biggest two factors determining airport preference among locally-originating passengers were (1) proximity of the airport, and (2) cost of airfare. 61 percent stated the proximity of the airport was the biggest consideration, while 15 percent stated the cost of the airfare was the biggest. The remaining 24 percent selected among the seven other factors.

*Trip purpose:* Growth in local originations was driven by increases in non-business trips, which have increased steadily since 2002. DCA had the largest share of business purpose originations (51%), while BWI had the largest share of non-business originations (66%).

*Trip origin:* Most local originations occurred from private residences, but at DCA, there were more originations collectively from employment sites and hotel/motels than private residences.

*Mode of access:* Private autos or rentals constituted the preferred access mode at all three airports, however, taxi and Metrorail also accounted for substantial originations at DCA, underscoring the larger share of business trip purpose.

*Geographic findings:* Mr. Canan presented a series of maps that portrayed the regional location of concentrations of local originations for each of the three airports. He also pointed out, in response to Mr. Biediadny's question, that several zones contain anomalous information due to statistical noise in the survey data.

Finally, Mr. Canan concluded his briefing by explaining that data from the APS, along with terminal area enplanement forecasts (provided by the three airports) and regional land use data, can be used to calculate zone-level ground access forecasts that can be incorporated into the regional travel model.

In response to Mr. Kirby's question concerning funding sources for the survey, Mr. Canan explained that the data collection portion of the survey is jointly funded by the Maryland Aviation Administration and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, while the data processing and documentation portion of the survey is funded by FAA, which also funds the remaining projects in the CASP program.

Chairman Erenrich asked if the three airports are legally required to use the data and forecasts from the CASP program studies. Mr. Canan explained that while they are not legally required to do so, they collaborate extensively in the CASP program in an effort to ensure that the planning data resulting from CASP studies will be compatible for use in airport planning studies. Moreover, consultants preparing studies for the airports often use data from CASP program studies.

Mr. Kirby also asked if the transit utilization rates for ground access has remained consistent over the years. It has been consistent; however, it is reasonable to assume higher utilization in the future resulting from the development of Metrorail to IAD.

Finally, Mr. Davis asked if the data from the APS had been used yet to draw any conclusions on facility requirements, particularly with respect to terminal development. Mr. Canan explained that that will occur later in the CASP planning process when results from the survey, along with other available data and trends, are examined to prepare recommendations in the update of the ground access element of the regional air systems plan.

#### **11. Update on the Development of the "CLRP Aspirations" and "What Would It Take" Scenarios**

Ms. Bansal and Mr. Eichler provided a brief update on the development of the two new scenarios, the CLRP Aspirations and What Would it Take scenarios. Ms. Bansal provided a summary of the brief presentation that was given to the TPB at their December meeting. She also provided an overview of the current staff progress on finalizing the land use inputs for the CLRP Aspirations scenario,

including plans for individual jurisdictional meetings regarding the land use component.

Mr. Eichler provided a progress report on the transportation component, including coding of the proposed BRT network. They also briefly discussed a meeting with land use and transportation planners in Fairfax County, which would serve as a model for meetings with each jurisdiction in the TPB member area. It was expressed by committee members that transportation and land use planners should meet jointly to discuss both components of the study.

**12. Other Business**

None.

**13. Adjourn**