

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

March 17, 2004

Dennis Jaffe, Chair

The Citizens Advisory Committee held its monthly meeting on March 11. This was the first meeting of the 2004 committee, whose members were appointed at the last TPB meeting on February 18. It was also the first meeting at which Dennis Jaffe presided as chair for 2004.

Discussion with TPB Chair Chris Zimmerman

Chairman Zimmerman welcomed the new CAC and said he looked forward to working with the committee. He said his major priority for the year would be follow-up on the *Time to Act* report, which highlighted the region's critical short-term transportation funding shortfall. He said the TPB had called upon regional leaders at the federal, state and local levels to double the revenues that are currently expected over the next six years.

CAC member questions and comments included the following:

- *CAC Agenda for the Year*

Members asked what would Chairman Zimmerman like the CAC to do this year. Mr. Zimmerman said he would like to strengthen CAC's process for input and dialogue with the TPB. He said he valued the CAC's role of screening issues for the TPB and bringing key issues to the Board's attention. He said he would like the CAC to not simply provide a list of issues, but also highlight priority concerns as well, i.e., indicating "here's one thing to really focus on." He said he wants a more continuous process of communicating with the CAC, not just through the monthly report delivered to the TPB.

Chairman Zimmerman said he and Dennis Jaffe had discussed ways in which the CAC might focus on tangible short-term issues where discernible and more immediate impacts could be made. He said the CAC might look at relatively small-scale concerns that might be tackled to improve people's commutes and other travel experiences. He cited Mr. Jaffe's work last year in promoting the distribution and posting of Metro system bus maps. He suggested that in many cases, small applications of energy and funds can make significant improvements in the region's transit, pedestrian and highway systems. Mr. Jaffe said that making the experience of riding Metro better by improving various services could strengthen local public support for our transit system.

- *Dulles Rail and the Purple Line*

Chairman Zimmerman was asked about his feelings on two key transit lines: Dulles Rail and the Purple Line.

Mr. Zimmerman said that the airport connections that are currently available take too long. He said he supported Dulles Rail. Regarding the Purple Line, he said that priorities seem to be shifting in Maryland; whether the Purple Line is built will be a Maryland decision more than anything else.

- ***Funding Issues***

A member commented that the region's call for more federal and state transportation funding is undercut by our local governments' failure to do enough to solve their own funding problems.

Mr. Zimmerman challenged the implication that local governments do not contribute significant sums to the fund transportation, but he agreed that localities could do more. He said that he and other regional leaders had worked very hard to get the Northern Virginia sales tax passed in 2002, but it was defeated. He said it is important to remember that similar referenda, when they were proposed in other parts of the country, often have failed the first time they went before the voters. Ron Kirby, Director of COG's Department of Transportation Planning, noted that in San Diego, a sales tax referendum passed on the second try after the projects in the referendum package were tailored to meet public needs.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that several years ago, legislation was proposed in Congress to empower the TPB as a regional funding organization. He said this was one option to consider, but not the only one.

- ***Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study***

Several members emphasized the importance of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS). They noted that the study was initiated in 2000 based on a CAC recommendation. Last year, the CAC pushed for the inclusion of the "Region Undivided" scenario, which was incorporated into the study. A member suggested that other projects related to improving land use/transportation coordination — both within and outside of COG — should be tied into the RMAS study.

Chairman Zimmerman agreed that more efficient land use is vital for effectively dealing with our transportation problems. He said this was probably his second highest priority for the year after the funding issues.

- ***Fractious Nature of Regional Decision Making***

Members discussed the extent to which the fractious nature of the regional governmental structure for transportation decision-making hinders our planning and our operations. Mr. Zimmerman said that despite obvious obstacles, the Metro system itself is a demonstration that it is possible for the region to work together effectively.

A member noted that a number of common interests do exist and should be focal points for bringing the region together, including a desire for economic revitalization and more housing in the core and on the eastern side of the region.

- ***Powers of the TPB Regarding Projects***

A new member asked how much power the TPB has in keeping projects out of the Constrained Long-Range Plan, even if a governor wants the project.

Chairman Zimmerman answered that his experience shows that governors usually get what they want. Within the TPB, the state departments of transportation, which represent the two governors and the mayor, are generally the most influential members. Mr. Kirby added that the states control their own funding streams.

A CAC member said he would support sub-allocated funding to the TPB. Mr. Kirby said a proposal to sub-allocate some federal funding to the TPB had been unsuccessfully broached more than 10 years ago. He said the concept could be considered again, if there were adequate support.

Upcoming TPB Agenda

Mr. Kirby previewed the upcoming TPB agenda. He said the comment period had been extended to April 10 for the project submissions for the 2004 amendments to the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP).

Member comments and questions included the following:

- A member asked about the accessibility of the public comments received to date. Mr. Kirby replied the comments are quite voluminous and are currently being read and categorized. A member suggested that a registry might be prepared of people who have contacted the TPB regarding the CLRP amendments.
- A member asked if the ICC will be modeled as a toll facility. Mr. Kirby said it would be.

CAC Outreach Meetings

Members discussed possible outreach topics for the year. Suggestions included a meeting on bicycle/pedestrian issues, Potomac River crossing, and emergency preparedness.

Dennis Jaffe said that a subcommittee would be formed on public outreach.

The CAC has scheduled a meeting on Anacostia light rail for April 18. A member noted that time is getting short to pull this meeting together.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Monthly Meeting
March 11, 2004

CAC Members

1. Dennis Jaffe, DC, Chair
2. Ephrem Asebe, MD
3. Steve Caflisch, MD
4. Steve Cerny, VA
5. Bob Chase, VA
6. Don Edwards, DC
7. Harold Foster, DC
8. Mark Friis, MD
9. Michael LaJuene, VA
10. Allen Mucnich, VA
11. Lee Schoenecker, DC
12. Stewart Schwartz, VA
13. Emmet Tydings, MD

CAC Members Not Present

1. Nathaniel Bryant, MD
2. Merle Van Horne, DC

CAC Alternates

Alphonso Coles, DC

Staff and Others Present

Chris Zimmerman, TPB Chair
Ron Kirby, COG/DTP
John Swanson, COG/DTP
Glen Harvie, former CAC member
Harry Sanders, former CAC member
Alexander Radichevich, former CAC member