




Item #5

District of Columbia
Bowie
College Park
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Loudoun County
Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County

MEMORANDUM**May 12, 2005**

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby 
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the April 20 TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the April 20 TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the May 18th TPB agenda.

Attachments



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Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
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Loudoun County
Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County

May 11, 2005

Mr. Dennis Jaffe, Chairman
Citizens Advisory Committee for the
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Subject: Support of the CapCom Regional Transportation Coordination Program

Dear Mr. Jaffe:

Thank you for your April 19, 2005 letter regarding the proposed regional transportation coordination program known as "CapCom". Several actions of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in recent months demonstrate the TPB's support for establishment of such a program. TPB Resolution R7-2005 of November 17, 2004 endorsed the concept of using the Capital Wireless Integrated Network (CapWIN) Program and governance structure as the basis for a regional transportation coordination program, and requested action from the departments of transportation and the University of Maryland to prepare a proposed work program.

That work program was presented to and endorsed by the TPB on January 19, 2005, for an organization to perform regional transportation coordination activities, and addressed potential startup and ongoing funding needs, funding sources and mechanisms, schedule, and a pilot program of activities and staffing. The TPB also directed that this support be communicated to the Chief Administrative Officers Committee, including a request for initial funding from the FY 2005 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program.

The Chief Administrative Officers and the states' Senior Policy Group (SPG) for Homeland Security considered CapCom and numerous other proposals for F.Y. 2005 UASI funding in deliberations during March and April. On May 4, the SPG announced a \$1 million UASI grant toward establishment of CapCom.

While the TPB is pleased that UASI funding has been obtained, the TPB also recognizes that the operation of CapCom presents a long-term funding issue that will have to be supported through regular transportation funding sources. Since we are now in the period of updating our National Capital Region financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), I have asked that department of transportation submissions to the CLRP reflect support for the regional coordination program. The exact level of funding from each possible source is still under exploration, but it must be sufficient for undertaking the core activities of CapCom.

Mr. Dennis Jaffe
May 11, 2005
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An ad hoc steering committee of key personnel from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Departments of Transportation, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the University of Maryland, and TPB has been meeting over the past year to shepherd CapCom as well as other activities to strengthen regional transportation coordination. Actions under this committee have included improvements to current communications procedures and protocols, identification of opportunities for technological improvements and interoperability, and guidance for the University of Maryland's development of the detailed CapCom UASI funding application. The TPB has been briefed on a regular basis on these activities by Mr. Tarnoff, TPB member David Snyder, and John Contestabile of MDOT. The ad hoc committee also has been laying the groundwork both regionally and on an individual agency basis for senior-level transportation agency consideration of how to proceed with a regional coordination program.

Your suggestion of a regional high-level discussion is timely, and is consistent with the groundwork laid by TPB and the ad hoc committee. In this regard, a TPB Work Session devoted to the topic of CapCom has been scheduled at 10:30 A.M. on July 20, 2005, immediately prior to the TPB meeting that day. Transportation agency leadership, TPB members, and other stakeholders will be invited to participate.

I share your sense of urgency on establishment of CapCom, and, by copy of this letter, will share my concerns with the senior leadership of our region's transportation agencies. Thank you again for the attention you and the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee have given this topic. If you have any further questions, please contact Andrew Meese of TPB staff at (202) 962-3789. I appreciate your support of this top priority of the TPB.

Sincerely,



Phil Mendelson
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Cc: Secretary Robert Flanagan
Secretary Pierce Homer
Director Dan Tangherlini
General Manager Richard White

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
For The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

April 19, 2005

Daniel Tangherlini, Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Robert Flanagan, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Pierce Homer, Secretary, Virginia Department of Transportation
Phil Mendelson, Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
Michael Knapp, First Vice Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Catherine Hudgins, Second Vice Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
David Snyder, Chairman, Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportations Systems Policy Task Force (MOITS) for the Transportation Planning Board
Michelle Pourciau, Deputy Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Marcia Kaiser, Director, Office of Programming and Planning, Maryland Department of Transportation,
JoAnne Sorensen, Virginia Department of Transportation
Ron Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Much constructive effort and discussion have taken place through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board concerning incident response coordination and communication by our region's transportation agencies.

It has been understood that efforts by the TPB's Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportations Systems Policy Task Force have led to a consensus among the local Departments of Transportation in support of establishing CapCom, a transportation coordination program, to bolster the region's preparedness. It has been proposed that CapCom be housed under the Mid-Atlantic Communications Inter-Operability Partnership (MACIP) at the University of Maryland.

On behalf of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Transportation Planning Board, I am writing to encourage a deliberative but prompt conclusion to the exploratory stage of this effort and a clear and concerted, region-wide commitment to take expeditious action to implement the recommendations of the MOITS Policy Task Force. It is now more than three and one half years since 9/11.

Do you support the establishment of CapCom? If you do not, could you articulate the reasons? Any meritorious perspective warrants careful – and expeditious – consideration. It is particularly critical at this point that there be a clear consensus of top-level, regional support for establishing CapCom – or, in the alternative, at least clarity and urgency with respect to considering any other option or viewpoint.

**CAC: Conclude Exploratory Stage and
Act on Recommendations of MOITS Task Force**

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If you do support establishing CapCom, do you favor your local department of transportation committing its proportionate share of \$3.2 million for the estimated, ongoing annual capital and operating costs? Assuming the \$2 million approved recently by the U.S. House of Representatives is approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush, it is expected to reach our region at the end of 2005. But without securing sufficient monies sooner to meet start-up costs, the need for CapCom remains unfulfilled.

On behalf of the CAC, I urge all recipients of this letter to meet together for a deliberative and conclusive discussion on: our region's needs relative to the ability of transportation agencies to respond to and communicate with the public regarding consequential incidents; appropriate solutions; and a financial plan to implement them. A group "summit" discussion would provide the opportunity to air and address any significant questions or concerns so that we can overcome compartmentalization and delay. This region cannot afford to see this critical issue languish.

Soon, the constructive conversation and effort on this issue will have gone on for four years. The time has come for a deliberative conclusion and expeditious action to honor our paramount obligation to ensure public safety.

Sincerely,

Dennis Jaffe

Dennis Jaffe
Chair
Citizen Advisory Committee for the Transportation Planning Board

cc: Judith Davis, Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Jay Fiset, Vice Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Anthony Williams, Vice Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Bruce Williams, Chair, National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council
Phil Tarnoff, Center for Advanced Transportation Technology



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Hon. David Snyder, Chair
Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems
(MOITS) Policy Task Force

FROM: Lora Byala, Chair *LB*
Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems
(MOITS) Technical Task Force

DATE: May 10, 2005

SUBJECT: Review of Information Regarding Carroll H. George's Public Comment
to the Transportation Planning Board on Highway Merge Concepts

Mr. Carroll H. George of Alexandria, Virginia delivered public comment, accompanied by the attached letter, to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at its November 17, 2004 meeting. Mr. George's comments, similar to those he has introduced to the Board on other occasions, proposed an "alternate yield concept" for traffic merging from an entrance ramp onto a limited access highway. You asked that the Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Technical Task Force look into Mr. George's concept. This memorandum provides a review pursuant to that request.

TPB staff discussed Mr. George's concept with engineers from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC), and the Maryland State Highway Administration. Staff also examined a number of items of correspondence to Mr. George from FHWA, VDOT, and the VTRC, dating from 1996 to 2003. This correspondence describes the results of engineering analyses of several variations of alternate yield proposals. The conclusions of these engineering reviews have been uniformly negative regarding the advisability of the concept. The reasons for the negative recommendation included potential for increasing backups by slowing mainline traffic, numerous safety concerns, lack of legal authority to implement such designs under current transportation law, and inconsistency of the concept with national Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) practices.

The VTRC described results of detailed traffic engineering analyses they performed specifically in response to Mr. George's requests. The VTRC findings were that traffic conditions under the alternate yield concept would, at best, be no different from what is experienced under current traffic engineering practices, and, at worst, would suffer significant degradations in capacity, flow, and safety.

Hon. David Snyder

May 10, 2005

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The VTRC also considered the potential role of technology, as described in Mr. George's November 17 letter, in allowing cars to merge in an assisted fashion (e.g., special electronic indicators that the driver, in theory, would follow to maintain the optimal distance between traveling vehicles). On this and other variations of the alternate yield concept, the VTRC specifically refuted Mr. George's claims of increased traffic capacity and flow, a finding consistent with discussions in the FHWA and VDOT correspondence.

Based upon the previous engineering analyses, the MOITS Technical Task Force concludes that the alternate yield concept merits no further consideration by the region at this time. The transportation agencies of the region likely would reconsider the concept only if it is proven and accepted in national research, and results in changes to standard traffic engineering practices promulgated through the Federal Highway Administration, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the MUTCD.

Attachment

Carroll H. George

7528 COXTON CT.
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22306

November 12, 2004

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman, Chairman
Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol ST. NE Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chairman Zimmerman,

If the TPB is advised how to substantially reduce air pollution in the region, substantially reduce waste of oil(energy), substantially reduce both valuable private and commercial loss of time due to congestion on freeways, essentially eliminate the reported over 6 collisions per day on the Capitol Beltway, and increase the effective capacity of the region's freeways at least 50% at peaks, all without requireing funding, would this Board press forward and go on record requesting proper authorities to evaluate by test under optimum conditions the design of a traffic control pattern being submitted that the TPB belives warrants such an investigation?

I have previously presented to the TPB and VDOT progressive improvements in the design of the operation of alternatng merges of incoming ramp traffic into through prevailing speed traffic, the direct cause of congestions and delays both entering and traveling freeways.

Because the designs did not completely eliminate all judgemental driver choices and effects of deviant driver behavior, none of the previous designs were even judged sufficiently safe or workable to warrant a test.

Further development on the design of the merge process has now reached the stage in which it is no longer vulnerable to judgemental or driver behavior caused malfunction, but is infinitely safer than as presently practiced, having reduced the hazardous speed differential between stopped and prevailing speed vehicles from the prevailing speed to virtually zero. The new design greatly increases reaction time intervals making the highway free of the sudden necessary evasive and stopping actions that cause most all the collision incidents that really cause congestion spill over.

In brief, see attached illustrative page, the new design calls for the lane line between the two lanes of traffic being combined is continued through the taper as the lane line of the ending lane so that only traffic in the ending lane sees a continuing lane ahead for indisputable right of way in the common language to all drivers, while the prevailing speed through lane traffic sees a lane line to cross to reach the common lane and therefore will be burdened to yield to traffic in that lane.

To guarentee that traffic in the ending lane does not tailgate, so there will always be room for through traffic to weave in behind an incoming driver just yielded to, large chevron markers can be placed in the center of lanes at specific follow distance intervals.

Federal and state highway engineers in the late 90's made a technical tour of Europe in search of ideas. Those follow distance chevrons, and also elevated video monitors to both record and encourage continual compliance were recorded in the report of the technical tour.

Those two items can put the onsite finishing touches on the flawless smooth meshing of traffics that will work equally well in dense or lighter traffic at non stop smooth prevailing speed, essentially zero relative speeds and hence the ultimate in safety.

The ultimate proof of course must come from a properly designed test. The test site must be a normally very heavily at peak congested interchange but with a downstream that can absorb the near expected 50% increase in flow rate.

For the above reason, and because it is already a grossly congested worksite in volving numerous temporary traffic pattern changes, the Virginia entrance to the only 3 lanes south of central Washington between Virginia and Maryland, and the only 3 lane section of the beltway fans out to 5 lanes down stream of the site, the Wilson Bridge is clearly the most qualified site to obtain the maximum results from the test and benefit the most possible commuters who have no other choice of route.

The test itself will allow some 50% more traffic non-stop continuous flow at PM peaks during the years of construction of the new bridge.

In this private retired engineer's humble opinion the TPB has an obligation to the people of Greater Washington to go on record requesting the responsible authorities to evaluate the potential of this concept at the uniquely best qualified site of the Wilson Bridge with a demonstration test. If permission to not follow the MUTCD in detail for the temporary test is required, then that too should be requested. The MUTCD cannot be an excuse for not running the test prior to expected updating it per the test results.

You now know how it can be done, so accept your responsibility take a vote on a resolution to obtain authority to not be restricted by the MUTCD for the test, and pursue the project in earnest for bringing a real quality of life upgrade this year to many thousands of Greater Washington commuters without requiring funding.

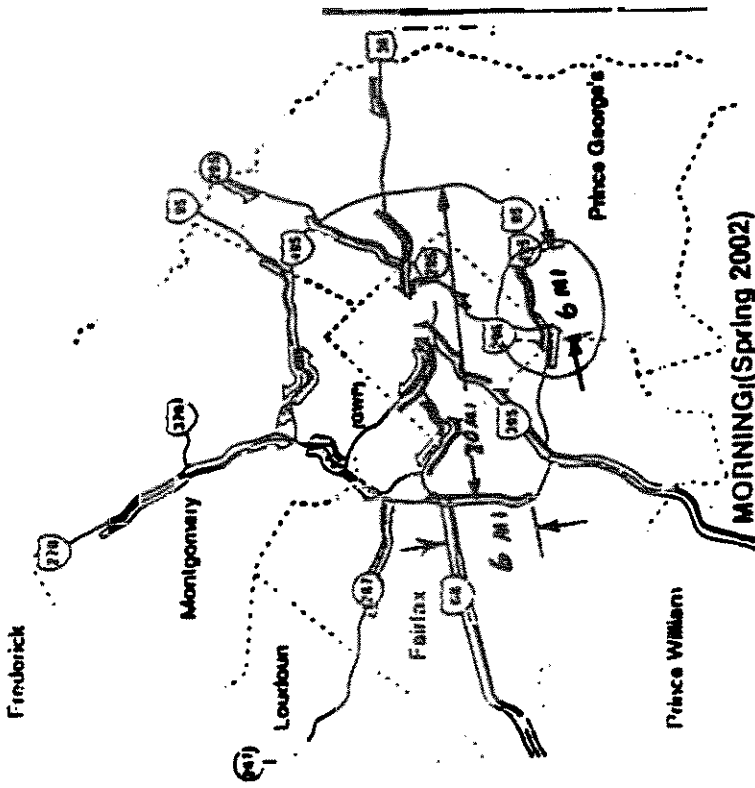
Respectfully,


Carroll George

Research & Development

Mechanical Design Engineer, Ret.

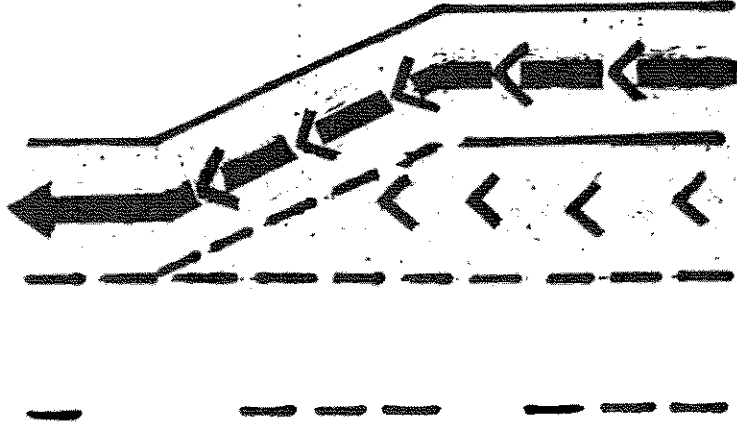
Veteran at Battle of Okinawa



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF FREEWAY
CONGESTION IN GREATER WASHINGTON

MERGE REFORM TO MELT DOWN
THIS GROSS CONGESTION

MINIMUM FOLLOW
DISTANCE BETWEEN
CHEVRON MARKERS



SIGN WHERE RAMP
JOINS THROUGHWAY

NEW PATTERN
RAMP HAS
RIGHT-OF-WAY
YIELD TO RAMP

THROUGH SIGN

RAMP SIGN

Carroll H. George

7528 COXTON CT.
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22306

BREAKTHROUGH: NO STOPPING ENTERING OR TRAVELING FREEWAYS

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Statement 11/17/04 to Greater Washington TPB by Carroll George

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Board, and members of staff. Thank you for this three minutes of your attention and acceptance of my written message revealing a national BREAKTHROUGH: NO STOPPING ENTERING OR TRAVELING FREEWAYS AT ALL HOURS.

I am Carroll George, private citizen not representing any organization, a Research & Development Mechanical Design Engineer retired 20 years from an over 40 year career developing and designing the most cost effective and efficient flow of manufacturing processes and the design of the machines and toolss to meet those challenges.

Most of you will recall I have been here several times before presenting prior designs of the traffic control process for combining 2 lanes of traffic into 1 using an alternate yield concept.

The alternating yield merge reform models were not found acceptable for reasons best articulated by Dr. Gary Allen, Director VTRC, in the following two statements:

- "1. Drivers tend to behave selfishly rather than seeking to optimize overall system performance.
2. Drivers generally cannot accurately judge risk to themselves and others."

Whereas my whole career was designing efficient flow problems involving inanimate objects, Dr. Allen pointed out that drivers must be presented with only one legal and physical choice of action, and that one restricted choice must provide maximum advantage to every driver so there is no motivation or opportunity for any driver to act in a selfixh or risky manner for personal advantage.

I have met the challenge, see attached illustrative page, with the Ramp Right-of-Way Non-Stop merge reform fortified with on site specific follow distance markers and elevated video monitors to record and encourage total compliance. Drivers have but one legal choice which is in every drivers best interest.

The more aggressively incoming traffic gets up to prevailing speed the less the speed differential at merge between all drivers and hence the safest possible merging environment that acceleration lanes are designed to provide for. Through drivers need only make minor speed adjustments to weave in behind a driver just yielded to.

My letter to Chairman Zimmerman is attached also to provide everyone with the complete picture of the issue.

This private citizen with the idea has no clout to get any action on this fantastic issue that can eliminate delays entering and traveling freeways, eliminate gross air pollution, gross waste of energy and time, and the inescusable safety record of over 6 reported collisions per day on the Capital Beltway.

In short LET'S ROLL! Thank you.