

# **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

## **1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the September 7, 2007 Technical Committee Meeting**

Minutes were approved with a change to clarify Chair Harrington's question in Item #6.

## **2. Review of Draft Call for Projects and Schedule for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2008 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and FY 2009-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Kirby discussed the Call for Projects document. He noted that the schedule for the next cycle was accelerated, calling for release of the Call for Projects in October with a January 4 deadline for project submissions. He said the schedule had been reviewed and was acceptable to the state DOTs and WMATA.

Mr. Biesiadny said that the NVTC had discussed the schedule and decided it was reasonable. Discussion turned to the date of releasing the project submissions and the draft air quality scope of work for public comment. Mr. Kirby said that these items have traditionally been released at the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, a week prior to the TPB meeting date. It was decided that the release for public comment should be pushed back until the January 16 TPB meeting, to give agencies more time to review and finalize their inputs after the January 4 deadline.

Mr. Shrestha noted that capital budgets aren't always approved until later in the year and asked what would happen if new projects needed to be submitted after the initial release. Mr. Kirby noted that the schedule was ambitious, but that it was possible to let the schedule slip or extend it if necessary. Mr. Moss expressed a similar concern. Mr. Kirby added that projects that don't have conformity impacts could be added in to the TIP at any time prior to its release for public comment. Mr. Srikanth noted that VDOT has often submitted amendments to get projects into the CLRP and TIP for preliminary engineering, which do not require a conformity analysis until they are being proposed for construction. This way, projects that may come up after the cycle has begun can still get funding for the initial phases without requiring that the conformity process be redone.

## **3. Review of the Draft TPB Participation Plan**

Mr. Swanson gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the purpose, structure, and development of the draft TPB Participation Plan, a document required under SAFETEA-LU. He noted several recommendations that arose from the recently conducted evaluation of TPB public involvement activities, and described how the Participation Plan addresses these issues as well as new federal requirements. He also detailed a strategic framework that staff hopes to use to focus limited resources for public involvement and mentioned certain activities staff hopes to expand.

Ms. Harvey suggested adding a glossary of terms to the website that describe the technical jargon commonly used at TPB and Subcommittee meetings. She also said it would be helpful if icons could be developed for some of the more common terms and used in publications for public dissemination.

Mr. Foster asked how the TPB planned to strategically plan outreach. Mr. Swanson said this would include crafting an annual program that balanced resources and programming to the three constituencies described in his presentation. Mr. Foster suggested attending public meetings sponsored by jurisdictions and presenting regional information in these forums. Mr. Swanson said this could be a strategy used by the TPB, and said they find it more effective working with established organizations and meeting schedules.

Mr. Mokhtari asked how information about the same topic would be tailored and developed for the three constituencies. Mr. Swanson used the "Citizen's Guide to Regional Decision-Making" as an example, noting the content of this document is appropriate for someone with, or who wishes to gain, a detailed knowledge of the TPB Process. He said one option for the interested public would be to develop a brochure with highlights from the "Citizen's Guide."

Mr. Biesiadny noted the goal of using "plain language," but commented that the idea of the "regional story" was not clearly explained in the Participation Plan and suggested that staff clarify this important idea further. Mr. Swanson said TPB staff would discuss their view of this idea and determine edits for the Plan. Mr. Srikanth echoed that the "regional story" concept should be articulated in the Plan, and then executed in the annual program. He also added that the content of the "regional story" should have a component that described the CLRP and the TIP. Mr. Mokhtari suggested building on the "regional story" each year through activities scheduled in the annual program. Mr. Swanson concluded the discussion by saying the "regional story" relates to the idea that all partners in the region are involved in contributing to the transportation and land-use direction of the region.

Mr. Biesiadny noted that a fourth category, the "disinterested public," was discussed at previous meetings and he asked if this would be reflected in the Plan. He noted that he believes there is value in addressing this population both in the Plan and also through annual programming. Mr. Swanson said that through outreach efforts both on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study and for the Participation Plan, members of the public said they felt the TPB's time and efforts would be best spent working with the informed constituency and providing this constituency with information that would enable them to participate in TPB activities, but also provide their communities with information about the TPB.

Mr. Shrestra suggested as an activity in the annual participation program to educate abutting jurisdictions on conflicting issues in their individual transportation plans.

#### **4. Briefing on Establishing a TPB Task Force for the Regional Accessibility and Mobility Scenario Study (RMAS)**

Mr. Kirby referred to the mailout item, which contained a presentation and report given to the TPB at its July 18 meeting, as well as a memorandum proposing the creation of a new TPB Task Force on the Scenario Study, as requested by the TPB. He described the progress of the Scenario Study since its inception, including research activities and products, as well as the public outreach effort that culminated in the feedback summary report presented to the TPB. He summarized this report and the issues it raises about TPB scenario planning activities, and referred to the attached communications from the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee encouraging the formation of a task force to provide policy stewardship for the Scenario Study and related TPB activities. Referring to the cover memorandum, he detailed the proposed structure and activities for such a task force, which was discussed at the July 18 TPB meeting. He noted that TPB member

Mr. Knapp had agreed to chair the task force.

Mr. Rawlings praised the proposal to create the task force but said that DDOT was hopeful that future activities related to the Scenario Study would focus on questions of “how to” as opposed to “what if”. He said that the list in the memorandum of possible future study activities was not clear on this account. Mr. Kirby responded that the task force would be presented with information both about options for further research along with opportunities for implementation steps, and would be asked to make decisions as to the future direction of the study based on that information. This could include a decision to cease development and study of existing and additional scenarios in order to focus on implementation.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if future work would include looking at scenario costs and introducing financial constraints to reflect current realities. Mr. Kirby noted that the results of value pricing scenarios would be forthcoming and said that additional work would be done to estimate costs for the infrastructure included in the existing scenarios.

Mr. Desjardin asked about the overlap between this task force and the efforts of the COG Greater Washington 2050 committee. Mr. Kirby said that the work of the proposed task force would be more narrowly focused on land use and transportation, and on quantitative data. In contrast, the Greater Washington 2050 committee will be looking at other issues like schools, public safety, etc., and considering a longer time horizon for which quantitative data are not available. He said that there would likely be some overlap, however, and cited the example of the Scenario Study having influenced the Cooperative Forecasts as a positive instance.

## **5. Briefing on the TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee Comments on the Draft 2007 CLRP**

Ms. Newman presented the Access for All Advisory Committee’s comments on the draft 2007 CLRP. The AFA provides comments every year on issues of importance.

Ms. Hudgins, who is the AFA Chair, will present the comments to the TPB on September 19.

Mr. Shrikanth said the recommendation that Para transit vehicles be able to use the HOT lanes has been forwarded to the project team. Mr. Harrington and Mr. Mokhtari asked what the Committee meant by community bus service in relation to the Dulles Rail project. Whether local feeder service or regional bus service, the Committee does not want the rail service to replace bus service, as low-income people and those with limited-English proficiency are more likely to use the bus service.

Ms. Harvey asked if there was a specific incident that prompted the comment about involvement of people with disabilities in the development of the Silver Spring Transit Center. Ms. Newman noted that one of the AFA members had participated in a session, and just wanted to see additional involvement.

Ms. Samarasinghe asked about a specific incident that prompted the comment about the warning lights on metro platforms. Ms. Newman responded that there is an AFA member with low-vision who has trouble distinguishing them from the platform tile. In response to a question from Mr. Shrikanth, Mr. Kirby stated that the comments would be presented to the board this month.

**6. Status Report on the Regional “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign**

Mr. Farrell spoke to a handout, which showed the changes and additions to the draft plan that had been made in response to public and committee comments.

Ms. Samarasinghe asked why some projects had been eliminated. Mr. Farrell explained that certain projects, in particular those in Transaction 2030, were not yet ready for inclusion.

Mr. Biesiadny asked how often the plan would be updated. Mr. Farrell replied that that it would be desirable to update it every year, to use it as a tracking tool to measure progress. Mr. Biesiadny noted that the plan would be going to the TPB in July.

Ms. Samarasinghe asked what the relationship would be between this plan and the CLRP. Mr. Farrell replied that this plan was a broader “wish list” plan intended to inform the CLRP.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if the plan could show projects that are included in the CLRP. Mr. Farrell replied that it does, and referred to figures 6-3 and 6-4 in the handout and table 6-3 in the handout. Mr. Mokhtari asked why water was shown in the legend. Mr. Farrell replied that he thought it was important enough to show.

**7. Briefing on a Preliminary Evaluation of the Transportation/Land Use Connections (TLC) Pilot Program**

Mr. Kirby said that staff has begun conducting a phone evaluation of the pilot phase of the TLC Program and have interviewed about half of the respondents as of September 6. He said the evaluation will inform the second round of the program, listed in the FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as a placeholder using FY 2007’s funding levels. He asked Ms. Crawford to describe the results of the evaluation to date.

Ms. Crawford provided an update on the technical assistance projects of the pilot phase of the TLC Program, noting that the District of Columbia, Langley Park / Takoma Park, Prince William, and Charles County projects have been completed and that their products are on the TLC website. She said the Fairfax County project is in final review and should be completed in the next week or two. Evaluation interviews for this project will begin at that time. She said TPB staff has a draft of the public presentation on density issues, which is being reviewed by staff from College Park and Takoma Park. Once the draft is finalized, presentations will be scheduled in these jurisdictions. She said that the website has been updated with the products from the pilot program and that jurisdictions have provided review of the regional database.

Ms. Crawford provided a brief overview of her memorandum to the Committee describing the progress to date on the evaluation of the program. She highlighted key themes identified through the evaluations that depict how the program can contribute to regional planning, as well as identifying some potential refinements and improvements to the current pilot program structure. She noted that TPB staff would return to the Technical Committee in October with a full report on the evaluation of the TLC Pilot Program.

Mr. Beam asked if the funding levels would change in the next round. Mr. Kirby said that there was no plan at this point to change the overall funding level. Ms. Samarasinghe

noted that the funding for the regional clearinghouse component would likely be reduced because it has already been developed, and that the TPB could increase project assistance as a result. Mr. Kirby responded that this is a point where there is some flexibility for the second round even within the placeholder funding amount. He said it may be possible to fund a couple more projects, or to keep the same number of projects but slightly increase the funding levels for each.

Mr. Mokhtari suggested adding to the selection criteria a commitment on the part of the awardees to ensure the results of the projects will be applied to greater efforts within the jurisdictions. Mr. Kirby said this point would be considered as the applications are developed for the second round of the program.

#### **8. Briefing on Proposed TPB Responses to the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FAMPO) Policies on Allocating and Sharing of Regional Transit Funds**

Mr. Kirby referred to a handout dated August 31, 2007. The handout included a new draft response letter revised from the version provided to the Committee for its July 6 meeting, and now incorporating input from Mr. Harf of the Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). The cover memorandum of the handout summarized the changes made to the draft letter. Also attached were the comments from Mr. Bottigheimer of WMATA (which had been attached to the July 6 version), the relevant WMATA Board resolution impacting allocation of regional transit funds, and an excerpt from federal regulations addressing the topic of funding sub allocation.

Mr. Biesiadny said that Northern Virginia jurisdictions were ready to come to an agreement on the question of the defined boundary between the TPB and FAMPO Census areas, and would not need to wait, as stated in the draft letter, until completion of the 2010 Census. Mr. Kirby noted that there were differing views among other stakeholders in the region, notably in Maryland, who may have concerns about making such an agreement prior to the 2010 Census, and recommended keeping the current draft language.

Ms. Backmon concurred with Mr. Biesiadny. Mr. Biesiadny noted the length of time if the region waited until after the 2010 Census to resolve this. Mr. Kirby noted that the letter's current language leaves open the possibility of considering the FAMPO proposal, but not at this time.

Mr. Foster noted that such a line of demarcation already existed between the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan areas. Mr. Kirby responded that there was already an issue similar to the FAMPO issue for that boundary, since part of the contiguous Washington urbanized area had extended into Anne Arundel County (in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area) in the 2000 Census. That contiguous Washington urbanized area in Anne Arundel County may grow in the 2010 Census, with similar implications for transit funding allocation.

Mr. Foster thanked Mr. Kirby for including the comments from the PRTC.

Mr. Harrington noted that the 2007 WMATA rail ridership survey would provide updated information on levels of ridership, including from residents of non-WMATA-compact jurisdictions.

Committee members agreed to further review of the draft letter, and bring it back for discussion at the October meeting. It was anticipated that the letter would be slated for approval by the TPB at their November meeting.

## **9. Review of Draft FY 2008-2013 TIP**

Mr. Pfoutz distributed the Draft Transportation Improvement Program for the Washington Metropolitan Region, FY 2008-2013 (TIP). He explained that only Maryland MTA and the Maryland counties had complete submissions and that all submissions were due on September 28.

Mr. Austin explained the changes in the current draft from last year's TIP and where the states and counties were with the remaining submissions. He asked that the submissions be in current dollars. Mr. Kirby explained that FHWA wanted the submissions to be in year of expenditure.

There was discussion with the Committee members about the need for the total cost for the projects in the TIP being included in the submissions and for the CLRP costs being updated to reflect any change in the estimated cost. Committee members also discussed problems that they were having with the web based TIP and CLRP submission process and Mr. Austin explained what staff was doing to correct any problems being experienced.

The Committee also discussed the current schedule. Mr. Austin explained that the final draft would be distributed at the November 2 meeting after a public meeting scheduled for October 11 to present the draft TIP to the CAC explaining that representatives from each state would be asked to make a five-minute presentation on their part of the TIP.

## **10. Briefing on a Request from the Regional Bus Subcommittee to Identify Funding for a Region-wide On-board Bus Survey**

Mr. James Hamre, chair of the TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee, presented a memo to the Committee. The memo stated that the TPB has a unique opportunity to perform a coordinated regional on-board bus survey, because WMATA is performing an on-board survey. The memo requested that the Committee consider working to identify funding to perform a supplemental survey that would cover non-WMATA bus operators within the TPB region.

Ms. Samarasinghe asked where the funding might come from. Mr. Hamre suggested that one source would be from WMATA technical assistance funds currently in the UPWP for geocoding survey results. He said that other funding sources could also be identified, including other UPWP funds, contributions from TPB member jurisdictions, grant programs, etc.

Mr. Biesiadny asked for the opinion of TPB senior staff. Mr. Griffiths replied that staff feels strongly that this is a great opportunity to collect a good set of regional bus travel data. He noted that this survey would provide a mechanism to capture and count suburb-to-suburb trips normally not counted by other surveys

Mr. Griffiths also recommended a few funding sources. He mentioned the current UPWP funding for geocoding of the bus survey data, which will not be used in the current fiscal year due to the survey being delayed from Spring 2007 to Spring 2008. He

also suggested that he could allocate funding from the Household Travel Survey, currently underway.

Mr. Griffiths continued that a full on-board bus survey of all bus operators in the region would provide a real regional benefit, and that it is important to do it correctly. He volunteered TPB staff and resources to perform the survey, suggesting that WMATA contract with COG to perform their survey for them. He also noted the concern that there are multiple objectives being assigned to this survey. WMATA's primary motivation is for subsidy allocation amongst the jurisdictions, where as planners and modelers from around the region are hoping for more robust data that can be used to feed travel demand models. He mentioned the trade-off between asking a larger number of obtrusive questions and the number of responses received. He said that staff would perform a pre-test, with up to three survey forms asking different levels of information. The results of the pre-test would determine which survey instrument was used for the full survey, ensuring that WMATA's primary subsidy allocation goal is met.

Mr. Kirby then asked who would administer the survey. Mr. Griffiths replied that TPB staff would administer a contract with a consultant to perform the survey, and that WMATA would transfer the funding for their survey.

Mr. Hamre reminded the Committee that there is great benefit to having one survey instrument for the whole region, and that the audience for these survey results is not only WMATA but also the FTA and local and regional planning and modeling efforts.

Mr. Mokhtari asked whether there would be enough time to coordinate the regional survey. Mr. Griffiths replied that the survey itself would not be administered until the Spring of 2008, and that the TPB procurement process is much faster than that of WMATA. Therefore, WMATA's original schedule of soliciting RFPs in the Fall of 2007 can be relaxed. He suggested that the pre-test could be administered in late 2007 or early 2008, and the full survey could be administered in the Spring of 2008.

Mr. Foster mentioned that PRTC does regularly survey its riders, and that PRTC staff is willing to coordinate with the regional survey effort. Mr. Hamre offered that Fairfax County also is planning a survey and could cooperate with this regional effort as well.

Mr. Srikanth asked whether the identification of funding to accomplish this survey would require action from TPB. Mr. Kirby replied that, depending on the sources of funding identified, this effort may or may not require board approval.

Mr. Weissberg asked whether the Tech Committee would see a proposal at the October meeting. Mr. Kirby replied that a proposal would be submitted to the Committee in October, and that it would be forward to the TPB in October or November.

Mr. Srikanth inquired whether this effort would also require a standard 30-day public comment period. Mr. Kirby said it was unlikely, but if it did require one, there is enough time in the schedule for public comment.

Mr. Griffiths stated that he would contact the local transit operators and begin the process of coordinating survey efforts and identifying funding.

Ms. Samarasinghe inquired whether regional bus surveys of this type are a regular occurrence in the TPB region. Mr. Hogan replied that the past two surveys were conducted in 1972 and 2000, and that those did not cover transit operators in the outer jurisdictions. Ms. Samarasinghe suggested that a regional bus survey could be

performed on a regular basis, so that allocation of funding can be programmed into the UPWP when it is originally drafted and approved. Mr. Harrington offered that the FTA recommends a regular survey schedule. Following their advice would allow surveys of this type to occur on a regular basis and be budgeted for appropriately.

Mr. Griffiths summarized that this is a unique opportunity stating that staff is currently finalizing its Household Travel Survey, WMATA is finalizing its rail survey and that the TPB staff is about to perform an air passenger survey. This bus survey would also happen within the same 12-month period, and the data would mesh well with the rest of the data, providing a valuable snapshot of regional travel patterns.

**11. Briefing on Update of CLRP Website**

Mr. Austin distributed a handout outlining the proposed content structure for the web site that will document the 2007 CLRP. He said that a draft version of the web site would be presented at an upcoming meeting.

**12. Review of Draft Agreement Between the TPB, the State DOT's and the Public Transit Operators on Metropolitan Transportation Planning Responsibilities in the Washington Region**

Due to the shortness of time at this meeting, Mr. Kirby called the Committee's attention to the draft agreement document that was included in the meeting materials, and asked Committee members to email comments to him. The document was to be discussed again at the October Committee meeting.

Ms. Hoeffner noted that VRE should be added to the list of agencies in the document.

Mr. Foster noted corrections for the names of the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission and Omnalink.

**13. Update on Air Quality Planning Activities**

Delayed to October.

**14. Other Business**

None.

**15. Adjourn`**