

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

### **1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the March 2, 2007 Technical Committee Meeting**

Minutes were approved as written.

### **2. Review of Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2007 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and FY 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Kirby said that the project submissions for the 2007 CLRP and FY 2008-2013 TIP had been released for public comment at the March 15 meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee. He said that once the comment period closed on April 14, the comments would be transmitted to TPB members a day prior to their April meeting. The TPB was scheduled to approve those submissions for inclusion in the air quality conformity assessment at the April 18 meeting.

Mr. Kirby summarized the TPB meeting materials including a document that highlighted the significant new projects with user-friendly descriptions and the table of inputs for air quality conformity.

Mr. Biesiadny asked about the nature of the comments received to date. Mr. Kirby replied that most of the comments were in support of the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project. Mr. A. Foster stated that PRTC had approved a resolution and was writing a letter to the TPB Chair outlining their concerns about the transit plan for the HOT Lanes project. Mr. Biesiadny added that NVTC had also approved a similar letter.

Mr. Kirby gave an update on activities to respond to the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FAMPO) request for an allocation of the federal transit funds for the Washington urbanized area. He said that a conference call was held to discuss proposed TPB responses with senior staff of the region's designated recipients of formula transit assistance. He described three key issues that will be addressed in a draft letter from the TPB to FAMPO.

Mr. Kirby said that FAMPO has urged the TPB to advocate for the Fredericksburg Area to be designated a separate urbanized area with a Stafford County border line as a result of the 2010 Census. He said that the proposed TPB response will be not to take any position on this designation at this time.

Regarding the FAMPO request that it receive a portion of the FTA Section 5307 funds based upon population and population density factors, Mr. Kirby said that the proposed TPB response will be not to sub-allocate the funds. This would be consistent with FTA guidance provided in an August 2004 letter to FAMPO. FAMPO would be invited to

participate in the TPB planning and programming process with regard to projects serving the needs of northern Stafford County, and could propose projects that are eligible for Section 5307 funds for inclusion in the CLRP and TIP.

Mr. Kirby said that FAMPO has requested that it receive a portion of the FTA Section 5307 funds based upon its bus service-miles as PRTC does currently. He explained that a WMATA Board resolution in 2000 has been identified that prohibits any such sub-allocations. He commented that he will meet with WMATA staff to explore if this position could be changed.

Mr. Biesiadny reported that NVTC and PRTC during a discussion of VRE did approve supporting the designation of a separate urbanized area with a Stafford County border line based upon the 2010 Census.

Mr. Srikanth commented that FAMPO sent TPB a letter in September 2006 and that there still is no formal response. Mr. Kirby said that the draft TPB response letter of October 2006 has been reviewed and discussed since then, and that the main issue now is the WMATA resolution prohibiting sub-allocations based upon bus-service miles. He said that there will be one more conference call to discuss this. He will then finalize the draft TPB letter for review by the Technical Committee and TPB.

Mr. Canizales said that a FAMPO board member has expressed interest in resolving this sub-allocation issue and that FTA may be asked to become involved.

Mr. Biesiadny commented that this sub-allocation decision could set an important precedent.

**3. Review of the Comments Received to Date on the Draft Scope of Work for Conducting the Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2007 CLRP and FY2008-2013 TIP**

Mr. Clifford reviewed the draft scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis that was included in the mailout. He noted that the scope had been released for public comment last month. Since the Committee had seen the scope in March, Mr. Clifford did not go over it in detail. He mentioned that the scope was similar to last year's, and that the years for which 8-hour ozone emissions budgets are anticipated include 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Mr. Clifford said that he discussed the scope at MWAQC's Air quality subcommittee conference call. The subcommittee asked if the scope would be updated to reflect the analysis of additional PM2.5 precursor pollutants addressed in EPA's new [PM2.5](#) implementation rule which was released the day before the meeting. Mr. Clifford said that he had not yet reviewed the new rule, but that he did not expect to include additional pollutants in the air quality analysis. He noted that the scope would be discussed at MWAQC's upcoming Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.

Mr. Biesiadny asked if Mr. Clifford was proposing not to analyze sulfur dioxide. Mr. Clifford confirmed that he did not expect to have to analyze sulfur dioxide, but would have to read the new rule. Mr. Biesiadny asked if the air agencies would be comfortable with that. Mr. Clifford said that the sentiment of the email discussion subsequent to the subcommittee meeting led him to believe that they would be. Mr. King agreed, and said that the pollutant might be included in the future, but the likely first step would be to include it in a SIP. Mr. Kumar mentioned that sulfur dioxide would be inventoried and reviewed to determine if mobile sources are a significant contributor.

Mr. Kirby asked if a proposed comment letter from MWAQC to TPB would reflect this. Mr. King said that it would.

Mr. Kirby reminded the group that the 8-hour ozone budgets would be used for this conformity analysis. Mr. Clifford agreed, stating that the budgets are expected to be approved for conformity use by EPA within 90 days of the SIP submittal in June.

#### **4. Briefing on the Draft Freight Railroad Realignment Feasibility Study**

Mr. Zaidain of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) reported the study concentrated on a seven-mile CSX freight rail line that passes through Washington, D.C. and vicinity, including through the Monumental Core of Washington just four blocks from the United States Capitol building. Part of the line is also used by Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express passenger trains. Aspects of the line include the limited capacity Long Bridge over the Potomac River (shared with passenger trains); the single-tracked Virginia Avenue tunnel in Southeast Washington, the height of which is too low for certain modern railroad cars and double-stacking practices; a freight-only bridge over the Anacostia River, and the Benning Rail Yard facility along the east bank of the Anacostia River.

The Freight Railroad Realignment Feasibility Study was funded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant Program for \$1.0 million. DDOT was the funding mechanism, and NCPC was managing overall project and coordination. The purpose of the study was to examine the feasibility of relocating the freight railroad line as a long term solution to rail related security issues. Products of the effort were to identify potential alternative corridors for the new alignment and conduct a cost and benefit analysis. NCPC coordinated with regional stakeholders and federal agencies. Parsons Brinckerhoff led a team of study consultants.

Mr. Zandain described the study approach, the alternate corridors examined, the benefits examined, and the estimated costs for the alternatives.

Overall study findings were that removing the freight railroad from the monumental core would greatly reduce the security risks of transporting freight through the region; that there are viable alternative railroad alignments for the freight line which deserve further study; realigning the freight rail would provide benefits to the transportation network in the Washington Region and the East Coast; and that the total benefits of realignment

would be greater than the costs. The next steps beyond this study were suggested as developing a funding strategy that considers the complexities of each alternative, including sharing public/private costs appropriately, capturing the benefits to offset the costs, identifying the availability of appropriate security and transportation funding, preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, and identify a preferred alternative including the identification of necessary mitigation for project-related impacts.

In response to a question from Mr. Maslanka, Mr. Zaidain noted that regular "orange juice" trains travel along this rail route from Florida to a processing plant in New Jersey.

In response to a question from Mr. Weissberg on local government involvement in the study, Mr. Zaidain noted that the study was conducted with the bigger players at the table, not including the locals, and that outreach was now being undertaken with local stakeholders.

In response to a question from Mr. H. Foster, Mr. Zaidain stated that the study did not include a "no-build" scenario, because it was a feasibility study, but that a no-build scenario could be looked at by whoever would conduct a next study.

In response to a question from Mr. Mokhtari, Mr. Zaidain stated that security protection improvements to the existing line were being studied under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and involved sensitive information not available to this study. Mr. Mokhtari commented on the potential difficulties of securing the proposed tunnel. Mr. Zaidain noted that safety and security feature costs were considered in the cost estimates of all three alternatives.

In response to a question from Mr. Mokhtari, Mr. Zaidain did not have specific information on how the eastern alignments would benefit the Port of Baltimore. Mr. Weissberg noted that funding one of these National Capital Region improvements could drain away funding that might otherwise have been available for the proposed Baltimore rail improvements.

In response to a question from Mr. Meese, Mr. Zaidain confirmed that the study estimated real estate benefits along the current rail route in the District of Columbia, but did not estimate or include such benefits or disbenefits for real estate impacts along the routes of the two eastern alternatives. The projected value of real estate along the eastern alignments, therefore, was not adjusted for the impact of the proposed lines.

In response to a question from Mr. Biesiadny, Mr. Zaidain stated that the NCPC had met with most of the affected local jurisdictions to discuss the study.

In response to a question from Ms. Ashby, Mr. Zaidain stated that the study did not address who would own the rail lines after realignment.

Mr. Weissberg noted the potential of security-improved freight rail cars, which could be a part of a no-build alternative. Mr. A. Foster noted that a no-build alternative should include an estimate of the cost of increasing congestion for more freight traffic on roads.

**5. Briefing on the Regional “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign**

Mr. Farrell spoke to a PowerPoint presentation and handout on the Spring 2007 regional pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign, and proposed actions and funding for Fall 2007 & Spring 2008.

Ms. Ashby noted that the letter from Arlington was signed by Mr. Ferguson. It offers to double Arlington’s commitment only if other jurisdictions reciprocate.

In response to a question regarding pedestrian fatalities and the program’s effectiveness, Mr. Farrell replied that pedestrian fatalities have been declining gradually. Program effectiveness is measured first in terms of target audience awareness of the campaign messages, and second by reported changes in behavior. This information is obtained from before and after surveys of area motorists, and it shows that the target audience is hearing and remembering the campaign messages, and that driver and pedestrian behavior is improving, with fewer motorists failing to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks, and fewer pedestrians suddenly running into the roadway.

Mr. Mokhtari questioned the per capita basis for the local funds requests, asking if per crash or fatality might be more fair. Mr. Farrell replied that five cents per capita was the simplest rule, and that using crashes per capita is complicated by the issue of commuting – people often work or shop in a jurisdiction different than the one in which they live. Five cents per capita is only a guideline, not a rigid rule, so any jurisdiction is free to contribute less.

Mr. Kirby announced that this item would be on the TPB agenda this month, with the response letters.

**6. Update on Comments Received to Date on the Visualization of the on the CLRP and Land Use and Transportation Scenarios**

Mr. Eichler presented a listing of updates made to the CLRP Google Earth visualization since the last Committee meeting. The majority of these updates were based on feedback from members of the Citizens Advisory Committee. He stated that the Committee members have one month remaining to provide input and feedback on the visualization work. One Committee member recommended that an email specifically requesting feedback should be sent out to the Committee. Another member requested that additional layers be added to the visualization, including performance data (traffic counts, etc.) and safety information (vehicular accidents, etc.). Mr. Miller informed the Committee that the Google Earth CLRP visualization could be presented to the TPB in May, and could also be brought back to the Committee at the next meeting.

## 7. Briefing on Version 2.2 Travel Demand Model

Mr. Hogan announced that the new Version 2.2 travel demand model was released in draft at the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee meeting on January 19th. It is an incremental improvement to the currently-adopted TPB Version 2.1D#50 travel demand model and addresses all of the recommendations of the TRB expert review panel. He indicated that the new model had been informed by 2000 CTPP data, WMATA bus and rail survey data, and updated transit and highway counts. A full draft report is available on the COG website, and staff is currently conducting sensitivity testing, the results of which are being presented to the subcommittee, which next meets on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

The major changes introduced with the Version 2.2 model are the following:

- an explicit commercial vehicle model has been added;
- external and through trip forecasting have been adjusted to reflect the capacity of the transportation network;
- revised volume-delay functions used in traffic assignment have been introduced, as well as a new queuing delay function applied to freeways and ramps;
- a significant reduction in the number of adjustment factors has been implemented; and
- the demographic models have been updated using 2000 CTPP data.

Mr. Hogan further stated that the model is matching 2005 VMT reported in the HPMS for D.C., Maryland, and Virginia quite well. Also, the Potomac River screenline traffic volumes are in good match with observed counts. The transit ridership estimated with the new model is within 2 percent of 2000 HBW linked transit trips derived from the CTPP, and within 8 percent for daily transit trips that are derived from surveys and transit boarding counts. In both cases, the transit trips estimated with the model are slightly higher than reported data, but part of this may be due to the need to derive “observed” data totals, since no one source of information exists from which to draw a ridership figure. In other words, some of the observed data may be missing from the comparison.

Sensitivity tests performed to date suggest that the new model responds as expected to changes in transportation capacity. If additional road capacity is added at the external boundary of the modeled region, VMT does increase as expected. A major finding is that the new lowered external and through trip forecasts developed with the model, do indeed reduce the overall VMT estimate in years running out to 2030. In fact, the reduction is significant enough to reduce estimated VMT per capita in 2030 from present conditions.

Mr. Hogan concluded his remarks by stating that the Version 2.2 model performs comparably to the currently-adopted Version 2.1D#50 model for analysis years 2000 and 2005, but with fewer model adjustments. The external growth assumption made in applying the model in a forecast has major impact on VMT growth. Consultation is underway with the Cooperative Forecasting Subcommittee regarding the forecasting of population, households, and employment within the region because these two forecasts are linked.

Mr. Mokhtari asked about the performance of the new model with regard to individual counts, as distinct from the more aggregate jurisdiction and screenline comparisons.

Mr. Hogan replied that the model is performing well at the regional grain, but he does not recommend comparing model output at this grain with more detailed counts. A more refined model estimate is needed for that, using finer grain analysis zones. He said that using a refined model and more analysis zones are good practice for corridor and project planning studies. He commented that as the models have become more complex some of these studies may not take the time to re-estimate their models to better perform at a finer grain.

Mr. Shrestha commented that the previously-assumed growth rate for external travel was too high in Maryland and concurred with the more modest assumption now being employed. Mr. Owolabi felt that the revised assumption might still be too high in Virginia. Mr. Griffiths noted that the Round 7.1 Cooperative Forecast may still generate a substantial increase in employment, particularly in Loudoun County. The workers to fill these jobs have to come from somewhere.

#### **8. Status Report on Regional Travel Trends Report**

Mr. Griffiths spoke from a handout that provided an outline of the major sections in the Regional Travel Trends Report he is preparing. He explained that this report has four major sections. These are: (1) Understanding Daily Travel Patterns in the Metro Washington Region, (2) Trends and Changes in Regional Commuting Patterns, (3) Increasing Congestion and Changes in Regional Travel Patterns, and (4) What's Ahead in Transportation and Land Use.

Mr. Griffiths said that he hoped to have a draft of this report for the June TPB Technical Committee meeting.

#### **9. Briefing on Study for Enhancing Consideration of Freight in Regional Transportation Planning**

Mr. Meese referred to a handout presentation. The background to the study was that staff in recent years had undertaken only limited freight activities, including participation in the Baltimore region's freight task force, and occasional truck data collection to inform modeling. In March 2006, the federal certification review of the TPB process recommended enhanced consideration of freight movement. In September and October of 2006, the Technical Committee endorsed a scope of work for a proposed consultant study, and a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued. In November 2006, the consultant team led by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. began work.

Study objectives were to identify issues and opportunities for enhanced freight planning consideration; to lay the groundwork for specific TPB UPWP activities in future fiscal years; ensure coordination with freight planning activities of member agencies; and to develop initial freight information for use in current regional discussions and CLRP

development. For conducting the study, an ad hoc advisory working group was convened including DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT freight representatives. The working group, consultants, and staff were meeting regularly during study development. The consultant team was able to bring in national expertise in developing findings and recommendations. The study was on track to complete work by the end of May.

Seven major tasks were noted for the study, five of which had already been drafted and were under review by the working group and staff, and two of which were expected to be drafted by April 30. Tasks were as follows.

- Document Context of State and Local Freight Planning Activities
- Recommendations on Future Activities and Committee Approaches to Freight Planning
- Recommend Stakeholder Outreach Activities
- Stakeholders' Survey Recommendation
- Identify Data Sets and Analytical Tools
- Regional Freight Profile
- Freight Facilities Initial Inventory and Map

Mr. Meese showed some example draft information from the study, including metropolitan Washington freight mode and directional split information from 2003; top metropolitan Washington trading partners by weight and value for 2002; and photographs of freight facilities in the region.

The entire study was to be completed by May 31. Then the focus would be on follow-up on recommendations, including the determination of the freight committee structure, increased outreach to stakeholders, and integration of freight information into the CLRP.

Mr. Meese stated that even though the Washington metropolitan area is not a major industrial area, we still have freight movement issues. Freight stakeholders will bring new perspectives to the regional transportation planning process. No information had been received to date on freight activities by local governments, and Mr. Meese asked anyone with such information to forward it to him.

In response to a question from Mr. Biesiadny, Mr. Meese stated that it was not clear from the information now in hand the breakdown between through freight and freight originating from or destined to the Washington region, but he would look into trying to get better information. Some of the needed information might be in private sector databases that would have to be purchased.

In response to a question from Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Meese stated that the information available might tell you origin and destination information, but could not tell you about the route (e.g., I-95 versus I-81) used to transport the freight.

In response to a question from Mr. Kirby regarding the potential views of freight stakeholders, Mr. Meese noted that answers given to staff in a recently conducted VDOT

freight stakeholders survey included respondents mentioning a desire for new Potomac River crossings.

In response to a question from Mr. A. Smith, Mr. Meese noted that a study draft would not be available until next month, at which time it was expected to be provided to the Technical Committee for review and comment. Mr. Meese agreed to follow up with Mr. A. Smith on freight information needed sooner for use in an ongoing Loudoun County plan update.

**10. Briefing on How the TPB Planning Process is Addressing the Final Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations**

Deferred to May meeting.

**11. Other Business**

None.

**12. Adjourn**

**TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES  
ATTENDANCE - April 6, 2007**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

DDOT                      Mark Rawlings

FHWA-VA                      -----  
FTA                                      -----

NCPC                                      -----

**MARYLAND**

Charles County                      -----

Frederick Co.                      -----

Gaithersburg                      -----

Montgomery Co.                      Bob Simpson

Prince George's Co.                      -----

Rockville                      Katherine Kelly

M-NCPPC

Montgomery Co.                      -----

Prince George's Co.                      Faramarz Mokhtari

Harold Foster

MDOT                      Shiva Shrestha

NPS                                      -----

MWAQC                                      -----

**COG Staff**

Ronald Kirby, DTP

Gerald Miller, DTP

Michael Clifford, DTP

Mark Pfoutz, DTP

Jane Posey, DTP

Jim Hogan, DTP

Bob Griffiths, DTP

Andrew Austin, DTP

Andrew Meese, DTP

Darren Smith, DTP

Dusan Vuksan, DTP

Erin Morrow, DTP

Wendy klancher, DTP

Michael Eichler, DTP

Michael Farrell, DTP

Sarah Crawford, DTP

Sunil Kumar, DEP

Greg Goodwin, HSPPS

Paul DesJardin, HSPPS

**VIRGINIA**

Alexandria                      Jim Maslanka

Arlington Co.                      Tamera Ashby

City of Fairfax                      Alex Verzosa

Fairfax Co.                      Tom Biesiadny

Robert Owolabi

Falls Church                      -----

Loudoun Co.                      Art Smith

Manassas                      -----

Prince William Co.                      Rick Canizales

NVTC                                      -----

PRTC                                      Anthony Foster

VRE                                      Christine Hoeffner

VDOT                                      Kanathur Srikanth

VDRPT                                      -----

NVPDC                                      -----

VDOA                                      -----

**Other Participants**

Chris Body, IVHS

Pat Mann, City of Alexandria

Jun Villoria, IDS Group

Calvin Lam, Fairfax County

David Kline, Fairfax County

David Zaidain, NCPC

Jenifer Huestis, DDOT

**WMATA**

WMATA                      Tom Harrington

**FEDERAL/OTHER**

FHWA-DC                      -----