

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

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

Minutes were approved with a correction to page 2 to clarify Mr. Rawlings' reference to the FY 2007-2012 TIP.

### **2. Briefing on 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 staff had reviewed the information on the submissions which was received by the February 23 deadline. He said there were a lot of details and considerable information provided on the I-95/395 HOT lanes project, the I-66 spot improvements project, and the Manassas National Battlefield Bypass project that needs to be reviewed. He suggested that the Committee consider holding a special two hour meeting on March 9 to devote to this review before releasing the submissions for public comment on March 15. He also noted that the Round 7.1 land use forecasts for the air quality conformity assessment would include the BRAC employment numbers at Fort Belvoir, but that at this time no new BRAC-related transportation projects with identified funding have been submitted.

Ms. Posey distributed copies of the air quality conformity table and highlighted the changes related to the submission information. She requested the Committee members to carefully review the table.

Mr. Kirby reviewed the project description form and supporting information on the I-95/395 HOT lanes project. Mr. Biesiadny had several questions and comments regarding more details on the proposed transit service and its costs in the financial plan. Mr. Srikanth responded and provided clarifications. Mr. Wolfenstein asked for more details on the proposed taper lane. Mr. Owolabi asked how free flowing conditions would be maintained. Mr. Kirby said that the tolls would have to be set to achieve good speeds and the free flow would be monitored and required under federal regulations because it is an existing HOV facility being converted to HOT lanes. Mr. Mokhtari commented that the tolls and peak spreading could reduce incentives to carpool. Mr. Kirby said that the tolls could get quite high in order to keep free flowing conditions.

Mr. Kirby reviewed information in the project description form for the Manassas National Battlefield Bypass project. Mr. Van Dop provided the history of the project and then described the proposed alignment, project benefits, and outlined the proposed funding plan. He said that \$133 million is needed and suggested that this amount could be assumed to be available in future federal appropriations, which is reasonable. Mr. Kirby responded that projects such as this one and the BRAC projects under discussion in

Virginia need funding plans that do not just assume future federal appropriations will be available. Specific federal legislative funding commitments for such projects are necessary. Mr. Biesiadny commented that the recent financial plan for the CLRP made assumptions about the sources of federal funds for new projects and that this project and the BRAC projects need to identify new funding. Mr. Wolfenstein commented that Fairfax County supports this project for historical preservation reasons but does not see it funded from existing sources. Mr. Kirby said that this project and its funding plan would be addressed at the special meeting on March 9.

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

Mr. Clifford distributed and discussed a memo containing two items. The first was the draft scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis. The second was COG's legal counsel's summary of the ruling from the US Court of Appeals against EPA's "Final Rule to Implement the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard".

Mr. Clifford discussed the court case summary, and noted that the court had vacated the rule and remanded the matter to EPA. If EPA does not appeal the case, the Washington Metropolitan Region will have to maintain the 1-hour ozone standard as well adhering to the 8-hour ozone standard. EPA has until March 22 to appeal.

Mr. Clifford walked through the work scope. He pointed out that Table 1 shows the planned technical approach. He noted that the analysis will include use of the new 8-hour ozone budgets and updated land use forecasts. He listed the analysis years as 2008, 2009, 2010, 2020, and 2030.

Mr. Clifford pointed out that we would have to wait on the federal agencies to see the implications of the court case. He mentioned that some areas, such as Fredericksburg, have their federal approval consideration on hold until EPA determines these legal 'next steps'. He said that the TPB is scheduled to approve the draft scope on April 18.

Mr. Kirby said that we plan to proceed with the scope and consider the 1-hour emissions budgets as additional criteria. He stated that the court decisions should not adversely affect the conformity determination.

**4. Review of Final Draft FY2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Miller distributed a March draft of the FY 2008 UPWP (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008). He also distributed a memo with a set of proposed reductions to the budget shown in the February draft document. He explained the February budget estimates were based upon TPB staff assumptions, and that VDOT had recently provided TPB staff with an allocation estimate which was about \$504,000 lower for the PL funds than was shown in the draft budget. He reviewed the proposed changes to the February budget levels, which reduced the Virginia Technical Assistance budget by \$68,100. He reviewed the four work activity reductions of \$436,500 from the basic TPB work program. He then reviewed the four work activities and budgets proposed to be carried over from the FY

2007 UPWP to the FY 2008 UPWP and explained that these would essentially restore the budgets to the levels in the February version.

During the review of the travel demand model work activity, Mr. Sanders inquired if the proposed small budget reduction would affect improving the regional transit demand model and asked about a recent press report on the estimation of transit ridership levels for new light rail or express bus projects under study in Maryland.

Mr. Kirby explained that for these studies the regional-level transit ridership estimated by the TPB demand model is utilized by consultants who apply their models to conduct corridor-level analysis. Consultants also apply their models to estimate ridership as input for the FTA's benefit-cost assessment, which determines federal funding eligibility for such projects. He said that the press articles on these studies are saying that the consultants will require more time to refine their analysis and ridership estimates for these projects before they are submitted to FTA for review.

Mr. Mokhtari commented that improvements to the regional model and the corridor-level demand estimation benefits everyone.

Mr. Kirby explained that for several years TPB staff and other agency transit demand modelers have met regularly with consultants to review and address issues with the finer-grained corridor analyses and forecasts and their relationship with the regional level forecasting process. Mr. Hogan said that the current and FY 2008 demand model activity includes work tasks and adequate consultant support to continue to enhance the regional-level transit forecasting process and to facilitate the use of the regional-level forecast data in corridor-level studies.

Chairman Harrington commented that in Northern Virginia a corridor-level model was used for the Dulles Rail project and that Northern Virginians are moving toward a regional model. He said that the Corridor Cities Transit service is difficult to model. Mr. Hogan commented that transit forecasts are highly dependent upon accurate land use inputs. Mr. Kirby commented that FTA's benefit-cost assessment does not capture the land use benefits associated with new transit services very well.

Mr. Miller described how the FY 2007 project amendments and carryover funding would be incorporated into the final version of the FY 2008 document. The Committee recommended that the final version of the FY 2008 UPWP and the FY 2007 amendments and carryover funding be presented for the Board's approval at its March 21 meeting.

## **5. Review of Final Draft FY2008 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)**

Mr. Ramfos stated that the draft FY 2008 Commuter Connections Work Program was released for public comment at the February 21, 2007 TPB meeting. He also said that comments were received from the state funding agencies and that a new draft of the document was produced for the meeting today that reflected the incorporation of some of the comments received. Mr. Ramfos reviewed the substantive changes made to the

document including changing the name of the Telework program to include Maryland and Virginia in the title to reflect that the two agencies were funding the program, the addition of cost breakout information for some of the program areas in the Commuter Operations Center, Guaranteed Ride Home, Marketing, and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Mr. Kirby said staff has been reviewing the comments received by the state funding agencies and that there will more than likely be an additional round of comments and changes made to the document. Mr. Ramfos stated that the final document would be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on March 20<sup>th</sup> and to the TPB on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT was very pleased with the work completed by COG/TPB staff on the changes in the document.

**6. Briefing on Applications Received for the Transportation/Land Use Connection (TLC) Pilot Program, and on a Potential TPB Applications for a Local and Regional Corridor Planning Grant from VDOT**

Mr. Smith handed out a list of the submissions received for the TLC Program and described the breakdown of applications across jurisdictions and the range of projects and assistance requested. He noted that the TLC Clearinghouse Web site will soon include information about all of the applications, and will track the progress of selected projects. He briefly described the process for selecting the projects, including approval of a staff-recommended package at the March meeting of the TPB. He also mentioned that a Request for Qualifications for consultants to perform the assistance work is in progress and will go out shortly.

Ms. Kelly asked when there would be additional application cycles, and if any of the applications received for the pilot program would be carried over into the next round. Mr. Smith and Mr. Kirby said those issues would become clearer upon more extensive review of the applications, especially in regard to their timing and urgency. They emphasized that only a few of the projects could be funded this fiscal year, but others may be identified for funding after July 1, 2007.

Mr. Mokhtari raised several questions regarding the process of selecting the projects to be funded, including the role of the Technical Committee in the selection and the criteria to be used, in particular if regional impact would be factor. Mr. Kirby said that staff will brief the TPB officers on the submissions, with an emphasis on achieving a good geographic distribution, a range of project types, and a group of projects with the potential for regional lessons. He emphasized that all of the projects were deserving of assistance.

Mr. Harrington asked if the TLC Clearinghouse Web site would include information about other regional projects and activity not included in the TLC assistance program. After Mr. Smith confirmed that the Web site would have a database of such activity, Mr. Harrington suggested a categorization for the projects.

Mr. Smith also noted that the TPB had been encouraged to apply for funding for TLC activities in Virginia through the new Virginia Multimodal Grants Program. He said that TPB staff submitted a letter of intent as a first step in participating in the grant program. Mr. Kirby provided details about the timeline for the application and selection process, noting that the TPB would have to submit a full application in April if selected in the initial review.

Mr. Srikanth asked about how funding received through the Virginia grant program would be used. Mr. Smith responded that it would allow the technical assistance activities to be expanded to more projects in Virginia at a higher level of funding for each. He emphasized that because the TPB already has the TLC program in place, it would be able to direct the Virginia grant money directly to Virginia technical assistance projects.

## **7. Briefing on the Draft TPB Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan**

Ms. Klancher gave an overview of the first draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan which will be presented to the TPB in March and released for a 30-day public comment period. The TPB will be asked to approve the Plan in April. The TPB created the Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force to oversee the development of the Coordinated Plan and the Task Force is chaired by TPB member Ms. Porter. The purpose of the plan is to guide funding priorities for three FTA programs, two of which the TPB serves as the designated recipient for (Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom Program). The Plan includes criteria for the competitive selection process for projects to be funded by these two programs. Ms. Klancher said that this is a new area for the TPB – and as such, the Task Force intends to evaluate the plan and the process next fall and make any needed improvements.

Ms. Burns asked how the solicitation for JARC and New Freedom projects will be advertised. Ms. Klancher replied that an application and a brochure will be developed and widely distributed. Mr. Foster asked what preliminary findings have come out of the focus groups. Ms. Klancher explained that a focus group with individuals with limited-incomes was held on February 24 and that the group generally liked the strategies and projects in the Draft Plan, but wanted more services, driver sensitivity, and stressed the importance of child care and the costs of transportation for students. A focus group with people who have disabilities and older adults is planned for March 8.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if criterion #4 (to what extent does the project meet a regional transportation need) precludes projects that serve only local needs from being considered. Ms. Klancher replied that projects that serve local needs would be considered, and would score higher if the project was innovative and replicable, which is another criterion. Chairman Harrington said that WMATA is working on an accessible pathways study and perhaps next year will apply for funding to implement some the recommendations to improve access to bus stops for MetroAccess users and others with disabilities.

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

Mr. Clifford gave an update of activities relating to the SIP by briefly discussing materials in the mailout item. The materials included correspondence between MWAQC and TPB relating to the use of transportation measures in the SIP and a request for TPB to advance up to 9 tons per day of NO<sub>x</sub> for use in contingency planning. Mr. Clifford reminded the group that the TPB basically feels that the measures should be preserved for credit in conformity. Mr. Clifford also discussed the mobile budgets as shown in Attachment A of the February 21<sup>st</sup> letter from TPB to MWAQC. He noted that at the time of the letter's writing that there were no TCMs received for use in the SIP. Mr. Clifford noted that the 9 ton NO<sub>x</sub> reduction in 2010 was estimated to come from fleet turnover.

Mr. Clifford mentioned that MWAQC would be meeting in two weeks to approve the release of the SIP materials, and that the draft materials are on the COG website.

There were no questions.

**9. Briefing on TPB Regional Value Pricing Study, and on Potential Urban Partnership Agreements with the US Department of Transportation**

Mr. Kirby gave a briefing on the status of the Regional Value Pricing Study. The presentation described the TPB's current work-to-date on Value Pricing, and included results of new analyses recently completed by TPB staff.

Mr. Kirby briefly reviewed the potential TPB role in Urban Partnership Agreements, as part of the US DOT's "Congestion Initiative" as published December 12, 2006. He said that because the TPB is not an implementing agency that operates road or transit service, it should not take the lead and apply for the Urban Partnership Agreements program. He recommended that the TPB could be included as a "participating party" in the application of any member agency interested in applying for the program.

Following the briefing, the Committee members discussed the importance of "the network effect," the idea that individual links are worth more when connected to other links. The network effect increases the value of the individual pieces of the regional value-priced network, and as such results in tolls that are higher than when analyzed individually.

Committee members also discussed the access/egress issues of the value-priced lanes: potential choke points may be created when users of the value-priced lanes attempt to exit into congested urbanized areas. Potential problem spots discussed included Tysons Corner, the transition between Virginia HOT lanes and Maryland ETLs at the American Legion Bridge, and the end of the current I-95 HOV lanes near Dumfries, VA. This is of particular concern, as the lanes need to maintain freely flowing conditions in order to qualify as fixed-guideway miles in the federal funding formula.

Finally, Mr. Kirby reiterated the next steps of the Regional Value Pricing Study. The next task is to evaluate the potential for transit on the value-priced network, and to assess the potential land-use impacts of such a network. Additional tasks include studying the selected corridors and transit services as a regional network. Finally, the impacts of such a network on low income and minority populations will be assessed.

#### **10. Briefing on Visualization of the CLRP and Land Use and Transportation Scenarios**

Mr. Eichler presented an update on the TPB efforts to enhance visualization of the CLRP using Google Earth. This update included a demonstration of the Google Earth visualization. Mr. Eichler spotlighted the changes since the previous demonstration:

- Instructions: A detailed introduction page which introduces Google Earth, describes how the CLRP is being displayed using Google Earth, and provides basic instructions and troubleshooting tips.
- Updated colors. Some comments had been made at the previous meeting that some of the colors were hard to see or distinguish from other colors. The color scheme has been updated to provide enhanced visibility and differentiability.
- Legend: The layer navigation in the Places panel now acts as a legend, allowing users to better understand which color represents which project type.
- CLRP banner: a banner has been included, which indicates that the shapes visible are part of the CLRP.
- Usability: Project shapes now “flash” and project names appear when the user points the mouse at the shape.
- Data: Project information, including public-friendly data about the projects, are now included for nearly all projects.

After presenting the changes to the Committee, Mr. Eichler said that TPB staff is now actively seeking feedback from member jurisdictions, including Technical Committee members, on the Google Earth CLRP Visualization.

Committee members inquired as to when the Google Earth CLRP Visualization would be made live. Mr. Eichler replied that it is currently in review and should be made live within the next few months. Mr. Kirby added that the TBP will be presented with this work before it goes live, and that it is critical that all of the project shapes and information be checked for accuracy before launch. Committee members requested that the existing Metrorail be added to the visualization, as well as jurisdictional boundaries. Finally, it was asked what projects were presented in the visualization. Mr. Eichler replied that it is all “regionally significant” projects in the plan: highway projects with facility codes 1, 2 and 5; transit projects and studies.

Mr. Miller ended the discussion reiterating that there is a very detailed and useful introduction/instructions page provided, and that Committee members might want to review the instructions.

**11. Briefing on the Development of the TPB Public Participation Plan and on the Evaluation of the TPB Public Involvement Activities**

Mr. Swanson said that SAFETEA-LU, the 2005 federal transportation reauthorization act, requires the TPB to approve a new Participation Plan as part of the approval of this year's CLRP and TIP. He passed out a memo that included a rough timeline for developing the Participation Plan. An attachment to his memo included relevant sections of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations of February 14, 2007, regarding the development of MPO Participation Plans.

To provide input in the development of the Participation Plan, Mr. Swanson said that the TPB in November 2006 contracted with Circle Point to conduct an evaluation of the TPB's public involvement activities. The Committee was briefed on this evaluation at its meeting on December 1, 2006. This evaluation will be finalized in the next couple months.

Mr. Swanson said a outline and working draft for the Participation Plan will be developed using the following initial inputs: current TPB Public Involvement Process, as amended in 1999; lessons-learned from public involvement activities since 1999; Federal Metropolitan Planning Regulations of February 14, 2007 (copy of relevant section attached); and the final report by Circle Point of the Evaluation of the TPB's Public Involvement Activities.

Based on the new federal planning requirements, TPB staff will conduct outreach on the plan with key constituencies. This outreach will include the various TPB committees and subcommittees, including the Technical Committee, the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Access for All Advisory Committee. In addition, it is proposed that outreach be conducted, perhaps in the form of focus groups, to key groups identified in the federal regulations.

Mr. Swanson said outreach for the participation plan will be conducted in May and a draft plan will be released for a 45-day public comment period in June. In September, TPB committees, including the Technical Committee, will receive final briefings on the Plan. The TPB will be asked to approve the Participation Plan on September 19.

**12. Briefing on the Spring 2006 Central Employment Area Cordon Count Draft Report**

Mr. Zilliacus distributed the spring 2006 Central Employment Area Cordon Count draft report and asked Committee members to review the report and forward any comments by March 30.

**13. Briefing on Version 2.2 Travel Demand Model**

Deferred to April 2007.

**14. Other Business**

None.

**15. Adjourn**

**TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES  
ATTENDANCE - March 2, 2007**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

|      |               |      |               |
|------|---------------|------|---------------|
|      |               | FTA  | Deborah Burns |
| DDOT | Mark Rawlings | NCPC | -----         |

**MARYLAND**

|                     |                   |       |       |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| Charles County      | -----             | NPS   | ----- |
| Frederick Co.       | -----             | MWAQC | ----- |
| Gaithersburg        | -----             |       |       |
| Montgomery Co.      | -----             |       |       |
| Prince George's Co. | -----             |       |       |
| Rockville           | Katherine Kelly   |       |       |
| M-NCPPC             |                   |       |       |
| Montgomery Co.      | -----             |       |       |
| Prince George's Co. | Faramarz Mokhtari |       |       |
| MDOT                | Ian Beam          |       |       |
|                     | Shiva Shrestha    |       |       |

**COG Staff**

Ronald Kirby, DTP  
 Gerald Miller, DTP  
 Michael Clifford, DTP  
 Mark Pfoutz, DTP  
 Jane Posey, DTP  
 Jim Hogan, DTP  
 William Bacon, DTP  
 Bob Griffiths, DTP  
 Nicholas Ramfos, DTP  
 Andrew Austin, DTP  
 Andrew Meese, DTP  
 Daivamani Sivasailam, DTP  
 Darren Smith, DTP  
 Paul DesJardin, HSPPS  
 Dusan Vuksan, DTP  
 Erin Morrow, DTP  
 Wendy klancher, DTP  
 Eulalie Gower-Lucas, DTP  
 Michael Eichler, DTP  
 Michael Farrell, DTP  
 Sarah Crawford, DTP  
 Beth Newman, DTP  
 Anant Choudary, DTP  
 Sunil Kumar, DEP

**VIRGINIA**

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Alexandria         | Maria White       |
| Arlington Co.      | Tamera Ashby      |
| City of Fairfax    | Alex Verzosa      |
| Fairfax Co.        | Tom Biesiadny     |
| Falls Church       | -----             |
| Loudoun Co.        | -----             |
| Manassas           | -----             |
| Prince William Co. | Rick Canizales    |
| NVTC               | -----             |
| PRTC               | Anthony Foster    |
| VRE                | -----             |
| VDOT               | Kanathur Srikanth |
| VDRPT              | -----             |
| NVPDC              | -----             |
| VDOA               | -----             |

**Other Participants**

Leonard Wolfenstein, Farifax County DOT  
 Harry Sanders, Action Committee for Transit  
 Jack Van Dop, FHWA  
 Jeff Cole, Fluor  
 Tim young, Transurban  
 Jeniffer Aument, Transurban  
 Harriet Dietz, Land Design

**WMATA**

|       |                |
|-------|----------------|
| WMATA | Tom Harrington |
|-------|----------------|

**FEDERAL/OTHER**

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| FHWA-DC | ----- |
| FHWA-VA | ----- |