

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**  
**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2007**

**1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the January 5 Technical Committee Meeting**

Minutes were approved as written.

**2. Status Report on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2007 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and FY2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Kirby asked for representatives of the implementing agencies to report on the status of their submissions, which are due February 23.

Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT and the jurisdictions were working on their submissions, but there was some uncertainty regarding some major projects. He explained that the funding commitments for the new transportation projects for the BRAC relocation of 20,000 workers to Fort Belvoir and Quantico were still under discussion by VDOT and the US Army. He said that he expected some design changes for the Beltway HOT lane project in the CLRP, and VDOT was working with the private firms to define the I-95/395 HOT lane project for submission. He also said that the General Assembly is in session and that any new funding could affect some current project schedules or create new projects. He said that the February 23 deadline was realistic.

Mr. Shrestha reported that SHA and MTA are updating the costs for the CLRP projects and no new project submissions that affect conformity are expected. Mr. Beam said that there may be BRAC projects for Aberdeen outside the Washington area.

Mr. Kirby commented that BRAC will be in the forecasts for this region and inquired about the cooperative forecasting process. Mr. DesJardin reported that the planning directors are on schedule with updates for the Round 7.1 forecast by the end of February. This will include the BRAC impacts at Fort Belvoir, Arlington County and Quantico.

Mr. Kirby commented that the BRAC land use changes need to accompany the transportation improvements. Mr. Srikanth reported that there have been extensive discussions on this with VDOT, Fairfax County and the US Army. The Army is scheduled to release the draft EIS on February 23 and it should address transportation impacts.

Ms. Ashby said that she had received a report that some part of Congress recently took some action regarding the Army budget that could influence the funding for the BRAC transportation improvements.

Mr. Kirby said that if the BRAC transportation improvements are not submitted by VDOT or the Army by the 23<sup>rd</sup> then a separate conformity analysis would be necessary. Mr. Srikanth commented that the issue is who is prepared to make the financial commitment for the projects. He said that perhaps Congressional actions will influence this.

Mr. Kirby commented that there must be consistency between the land use forecasts and transportation improvements. He said that it may be good for him and VDOT staff to meet again with the Army EIS team to try to clarify the schedule and what needs to be done to submit the projects. Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT has provided the project submission forms to the Army team and that they are aware of the deadline.

Mr. Shrestha said that SHA has contacted TPB staff about a problem with the information that was transferred for the new I-TIP. Mr. Austin apologized for the problem and said that he had replied by e-mail and the problem should be fixed.

Mr. Rawlings said that DDOT has reviewed the project funding in the FY 2007-2011 TIP and the no new projects affecting conformity are anticipated.

Mr. Harrington said that WMATA is reviewing the completion dates for the major projects and that there are no new projects.

Mr. Kirby said that once the project submissions are released that there will be a month for everyone to review them before the TPB acts on March 21.

### **3. Review of Draft FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Miller distributed the draft document for FY 2008 UPWP (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008). He reviewed the overall budget estimates and the work activity comparison table with FY 2007 budget levels. He went through each section and commented on the revisions to Figures 4 and 5. He also pointed out information in some figures and elements that were from the FY 2007 document and explained that these would be updated as soon as new information was received from the implementing agencies. He asked for comments and the updated information to be provided by February 12 for inclusion in the draft that will be presented for review at the February 21 TPB meeting. Mr. Rawlings said that DDOT will be providing inputs next week.

Mr. Kirby commented that the FY 2008 UPWP budget estimates reflect assumptions that Congress will soon approve the US DOT FY 2007 budget at level as authorized in SAFETEA-LU and not reduce it as part of a continuing resolution process. He said that the UPWP budget may have to be reduced later to reflect the final US DOT budget level. Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT had recently provided TPB staff with a budget estimate which is about \$500,000 lower for the PL funds than is shown in the draft budget. Mr. Kirby said that staff is seeking an explanation for the reduction and will work with

MDOT and DDOT to finalize the total budget for the March version. He said that it seems likely that the final budget will be reduced from the current estimate.

Mr. Mokhtari asked about the impact of the SAFETEA-LU requirements on the total budget. Mr. Miller commented that the new requirements have been considered since the law was passed in August 2005, but the final planning regulations have not yet been issued even though MPOs must meet them after July 2007. He said that SAFETEA-LU also has increased the total planning funding significantly as reflected in the UPWP budgets for FY 2006 and 2007. The preliminary FY 2008 budget is assumed to remain at the FY 2007 level. Mr. Meese commented that of the eight work activities included in Section 2 only two existed before SAFETEA-LU. Mr. Shrestha commented that the Maryland safety program is increasing its coordination with MPOs. Mr. Meese said that he is working with all of the states to identify the TPB role in safety planning.

Mr. Miller reviewed the draft Technical Assistance programs and explained that VDOT had provided its initial project inputs. He also said that in March the DOTs would identify any projects that would not be completed this fiscal year and should be carried over to FY 2008.

Mr. Srikanth said that VDOT was examining its current projects and inquired why the project to continue the FY 2007 Enhanced Commuter Corridor Count Project was not included. Ms. Ashby also requested that this project be included in the draft. Mr. Griffiths said that it was not included due to the potential funding reduction for Virginia PL funding. He said that the project would be included with a note subject to available funding in the draft version for the February 21 TPB meeting.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if local jurisdictions can make requests under the Miscellaneous Services project in the Maryland Technical Assistance Program. Mr. Clifford explained that this project covers a wide range of tasks and that any local requests for assistance are sent to MDOT for approval.

#### **4. Briefing on Draft FY 2008 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)**

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the draft FY 2008 Commuter Connections work program (CCWP). He discussed the budget changes from FY 2007 to FY 2008 which would include about a \$1 million overall decrease. This decrease was due to the fact that the TDM Software System project had large start-up costs in FY 2007, and there were several one-time programs such as the re-design of the Employer Outreach sales portfolio and start-up costs for the Live Near Your Work Public Education campaign during FY 2007. He also stated that both VDOT and DDOT discontinued the InfoExpress kiosk project.

Next, Mr. Ramfos discussed some of the highlights of the FY 2008 draft CCWP. He stated that the Live Near Your Work project would be continued and would allow for the local jurisdictions to apply for funds to cover specialized outreach activities to the business community such as seminars and workshops that would focus on workforce

housing incentives. He also discussed the data collection activities and reports that would be produced under the Monitoring and Evaluation project.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the state funding agencies were briefed on the document as was the Commuter Connections Subcommittee and that the document would be presented to the TPB on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Harrington asked if the CCWP was outside of the Unified Planning Work Program and Mr. Ramfos stated that it was. Mr. Srikanth added that the program has conformity implications since it's linked with credits from the TERM Tracking Sheet.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if the program could help with the distribution of information during public events or meetings. Mr. Ramfos stated that COG/TPB staff has assisted local jurisdictions with this type of public outreach.

Mr. Ramfos asked that comments and/or questions regarding the draft FY 2008 CCWP be directed to his attention.

## **5. Update on Air Quality Planning Activities**

Mr. Clifford noted that there were two items included in the mailout and one item that would be distributed. He started the discussion pointing out the November 7, 2006 TPB letter transmitting 8-hour ozone emissions inventory numbers to MWAQC. He noted that originally the focus was on 2008 as the rate of progress year and 2009 as the attainment year. Now the focus is more on a contingency plan. The January 26<sup>th</sup> letter from MWAQC to TPB speaks to the contingency component. MWAQC is looking to the mobile sector for a portion of the needed 13-16 tons of reductions by 2011. Mr. Clifford noted that TPB has benefits from technology measures from fleet turnover which EPA has approved for use in the contingency plan. Staff plans to prepare a response letter for TPB that confirms that the mobile sector has the needed reductions available for use for the contingency plan.

Mr. Clifford reviewed the December 20<sup>th</sup> letter from TPB to MWAQC and MWAQC's January 12<sup>th</sup> response letter. The letter to MWAQC offers TPB review and comment on the transportation measures to be submitted by COG member governments to reduce air pollution, in response to a November 8, 2006 COG Board resolution. The MWAQC response letter indicates their willingness to transmit measures to DTP staff for review, and asks that the Technical Committees of both groups collaborate and reach agreement on the handling of local mobile measures. The letter includes measures received by January 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Sivasailam distributed and discussed a February 2<sup>nd</sup> memo describing the Travel Management Subcommittee's review of the list of vehicle-based control measures. Two categories, low emission vehicle purchases and diesel retrofits, were reviewed. Staff identified some projects that would need to be removed from credit in the conformity analysis if they are advanced for use in the SIP.

Mr. Kirby said that the bottom line was that the list includes measures that have already been used in previous conformity assessments. He asked if TPB will be asking if these measures will be taken for use in the SIP. Mr. Sivasailam replied yes.

Mr. Kirby asked if putting these measures in the SIP will effectively lower the budget and Mr. Sivasailam confirmed that was the case. Mr. Srikanth asked which measures are already used. Mr. Sivasailam replied that one was Greenbelt's LEV program.

Mr. Mokhtari asked if there was much benefit to these programs. Mr. Sivasailam replied that the benefits in that particular project were at the 3<sup>rd</sup> decimal place. Mr. Kirby said maybe we should not worry about these small projects. Mr. Sivasailam pointed out that other projects had more substantial benefits.

Mr. Kirby asked what happened to the Fairfax County School bus program. Mr. Sivasailam responded that the project mostly benefited particulate matter emissions. Mr. Srikanth noted that no credit was taken for the Fairfax school buses anyway.

Mr. Kirby asked Mr. King if all the submissions were in. Mr. King replied that not all the commitment letters were in, and specifically mentioned telecommuting as a possible forthcoming project. Mr. King noted that some locals are concerned about using these measures in the SIP. Mr. Kirby noted that we don't want to take a procedural risk by including these projects in the SIP.

Mr. Srikanth asked if staff was sending a draft letter about these measures and staff confirmed it would. Mr. King noted that projects might continue to be input until the March 15<sup>th</sup> SIP review. Mr. Kirby noted that that would be too late for TPB review. Mr. Mokhtari asked if the issue was important, given that the numbers are so small. Mr. Kirby replied that yes, procedurally the issue is important. Measures in the SIP must be done to pass conformity. He noted that San Francisco had problems because of measures that did not work out specifically as they were input in the SIP.

Mr. Kirby recommended a preemptive blanket statement saying that the region is counting on these measures for conformity. Mr. A. Smith agreed. Mr. Kirby said language to that effect would be added to the letter.

Mr. Kirby asked Mr. King if there was any discussion of this issue at the morning's conference call. He said that Mr. Kirby should check with Ms. Rohlf, but that some members do not feel that it is necessary to do a complete 2010 inventory and were checking with EPA. Mr. Kirby expressed concern that EPA has been successfully sued a number of times, and pointed out that we should not rely on EPA guidance, only on regulations.

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

Mr. Eichler presented a demonstration of visualization of the CLRP using Google Earth. He stated that advanced visualization techniques are required by SAFETEA-LU. He first displayed the current online maps that present the CLRP, which are static images followed by a long list of numbered projects. He then presented a prototype what the CLRP data looks like in Google Earth. This showed the lines and points that make up the

CLRP alignments and point projects (intersections or rail stations) superimposed upon an “earth” composed of aerial photos. He demonstrated how users can easily zoom in and out using a scroll-wheel mouse, and pan side-to-side and up-and-down by clicking and dragging on the “earth” surface. Upon clicking on the icon of each shape, an information balloon popped up providing the details of the project. This information includes project name, project type, completion date, project cost, an image of the project and a web-link to the project’s webpage. Mr. Eichler showed how different layers can be switched on and off (Highways versus Transit & HOV versus Studies, etc.) to allow the users to see only that which they wish to see.

Mr. Eichler also expressed some possible issues with using Google Earth for CLRP visualization. First, there is no way of preventing end-users from zooming in to a very high level of detail. At this level of detail, some accurate project shapes will overlap with existing buildings on the aerial photo background. This might cause concern. Also, any inaccuracy of a shape will also become apparent at such a high level of zoom. He stated that, while staff will work to get the project alignments as correct as possible, it would be nearly impossible to reach 100% accuracy. He also stated that the lines (especially for those of studies and new roads) are intentionally wide and translucent to give the impression that the line represents a general alignment instead of an exact right-of-way.

The Committee expressed a lot of interest in this new visualization technique. Mr. Srikanth inquired about the timeframe for presenting this to the public. Ms. Klancher replied between two and four weeks. Mr. Kirby mentioned that staff needs to work on checking for errors in the database, and that the projects will need to be checked out by all the jurisdictions before being made available to the public. Mr. Srikanth then asked about the jurisdictions providing more detailed information for the projects than currently planned to be displayed in the information balloon. Mr. Kirby replied that we will be linking to the projects’ websites and, eventually, to our CLRP/TIP project listing website. Ms. Klancher then stated that the CLRP visualization using Google Earth must represent what is in the TPB Air Quality Conformity Analysis Network. As such, any changes to a project’s data or alignment must go through the full TPB CLRP/TIP process in order to be reflected in the Google Earth visualization.

Mr. Mokhtari asked about displaying the bicycle and pedestrian plan shapes via Google Earth. Mr. Kirby answered that the bike/ped plan shapes can and will also be included, and that this tool can also show other important TPB planning shapes, such as activity centers/clusters and RMAS scenarios.

Ms. Ashby and Mr. Canizales commented on the colors being used for project alignments, saying that some lines were hard to differentiate from other lines. Mr. Eichler stated that the colors can be changed for better readability, and that a legend can be added to help clarify the differences in the shapes.

Other Committee members asked about the ability to turn off the aerial photo background in Google Earth, so as to quell any concerns of project alignments overlapping with existing structures (private residences are of the biggest concern). Staff replied that,

while in Google Maps it is possible to turn off the aerial photos, in Google Earth it is not. Mr. Kirby then stated that, while that concern is valid, the advantages of using Google Earth appear to outweigh the possible drawbacks.

Mr. Eichler said staff will contact the Committee members in the next month to ask for input on the CLRP projects (visual representations as well as data) displayed via Google Earth.

## **7. Briefing on Development of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) for the 2007 CLRP**

Mr. Meese presented, referring to a memorandum from the pre-meeting materials, and a slide presentation. SAFETEA-LU requires that metropolitan transportation planning processes include a Congestion Management Process (CMP). The new CMP is a reworking of the previous requirements for a Congestion Management System (CMS). Enhancing the regional CMS was also a recommendation of the 2006 federal certification of the TPB process. The next Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) in fall 2007 must be SAFETEA-LU-compliant, including a CMP. This can build upon previous years' regional CMS activities.

A CMP is a systematic process for managing traffic congestion and providing information on transportation system performance: data collection/performance monitoring, a range of strategies for addressing congestion, performance measures or criteria for identifying when action is needed, and a prioritization system for the most effective strategies. SOV-capacity-increasing projects must be a part of a CMP.

The CMS was one of six management systems originally in ISTEA, and the only one still in effect pertinent to the metropolitan planning process. A mid-1990s CMS Task Force shaped the region's current CMS. This process has been addressing CMS through data collection and analysis, through implementing agencies submitting CMS information for non-CMS-exempt CLRP and TIP projects, and through consideration of MOITS strategies. These are summarized and described in a section of the CLRP narrative.

To address the CMP, a two-phase approach was proposed. Phase I, now through completion of the next CLRP in fall 2007, would involve the use of existing data sources and the performance measures used by those sources (e.g., Skycomp, arterial travel monitoring). Funding support would be within the existing UPWP CLRP and MOITS tasks. Phase II throughout FY2008 would be supported by the new, separate FY2008 UPWP CMP task with dedicated funding. This would enable enhancements to the CMP such as in mapping, data, performance measurement, and Web features.

The Technical Committee will be the oversight committee for the CMP, this committee is in the best position to address the breadth of topics necessary. It can be advised by other committees, such as MOITS on non-recurring congestion, the Travel Forecasting Subcommittee on recurring congestion and forecasting of future conditions, and the

Commuter Connections and Travel Management Subcommittees on alternative strategies analysis. Special workshops bringing together multiple stakeholders are also an option.

A preliminary schedule was presented. Updates would be given to the Committee approximately every two months. A first draft Phase I CMP was anticipated for the June Committee meeting, and finalization of the Phase I CMP in the October or November time frame, in conjunction with completion of the CLRP update.

Mr. Meese also presented a few samples of CMS documents from several other metropolitan planning organizations, including metropolitan Baltimore, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago. These showed a range of approaches to the CMS, including varying methodologies and levels of detail. Some regions use travel demand forecasting model output to estimate current conditions, others do not. This demonstrated that there was flexibility in addressing the CMP requirement.

Mr. Rawlings encouraged looking at value pricing as a travel demand management measure in the CMP.

In response to questions from Mr. Srikanth, Mr. Kirby and Mr. Meese noted that forming a CMP group separate from the Technical Committee was not recommended since this would essentially be re-creating the same committee in another forum. Staff will develop draft materials for Committee review from existing TPB data sources. Information will also be gathered through the CLRP/TIP Call for Projects form. The CMS section of the most recent Call for Projects has been expanded to include information on all projects proposed to address congested conditions, not (as in the past) just those that are single-occupant vehicle capacity-increasing projects. It was emphasized that the CMP was a process integrated with the CLRP; it was not to create a separate plan.

Mr. Shrestha noted efforts through the Maryland CHART program to address Interstate congestion, and the opportunity to use information from that process.

In response to a question from Mr. Mokhtari, Mr. Meese stated that the metropolitan Boston page in the handout materials, though just a basic map, showed that their CMS network included only freeways and a very few arterials, and was not as detailed as some of the other examples such as metropolitan Detroit. Our region will need to consider what level of detail we will have in our CMP.

In response to a question from Mr. Harrington, Mr. Meese noted that the performance measure "TTI" cited in the metropolitan New York page in the handout materials was a "Travel Time Index", the ratio of travel time experienced to free-flow travel time, and did not refer to the annual Texas Transportation Institute national ranking of congestion in metropolitan areas.

**8. Report on the Organization of a National Conference on Access Management in 2008**

Mr. Lewis of SHA distributed a flyer on the 8<sup>th</sup> national conference to be held in Baltimore in July 2008. He described the objectives and participants and reviewed the wide range of policy and technical topics to be addressed. Mr. Mokhtari commented that often there is a focus on good practices and that he suggested that a lot can be learned when bad practices are reviewed. Mr. Lewis said that the program is not finalized and welcomed suggestions and ideas.

**9. Briefing on Initial Draft Discussion of Environment Mitigation Activities**

Ms. Klancher gave a brief overview of the draft environmental mitigation discussion for the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) which was distributed for review. The 2007 CLRP must include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities developed in consultation with environment and natural resource agencies. The draft discussion was developed based on the guidance that VDOT has provided to MPOs. The draft letter to these agencies in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia was also distributed for the Committee to review along with a list of agencies and contact information; this information was presented and distributed at the January 19, 2007 Technical Committee meeting and no comments from the Committee were submitted. Comments on the draft discussion, the letter and the agency list should be provided to Ms. Klancher by February 14, 2007.

**10. Briefing on the spring 2006 Central Employment Area Cordon Count**

Mr. Zilliacus presented a summary of the findings for this upcoming report. He said a similar presentation was given to the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee meeting at its January meeting. He said that the full draft report will be provided to the Committee at the March meeting.

There were no questions from the Committee.

**11. Report on Recent Activities of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee**

Mr. Hogan indicated that the subcommittee had met six times during the past year and had conducted an extensive review of the Household Travel Survey, including the results of the pre-test. Other topics reviewed by the subcommittee were the following:

- Arterial and freeway monitoring programs;
- Spring 2006 Central Employment Area Cordon Count;
- Travel demand modeling in Montgomery County and Prince George's County;
- Report on TRB Travel Forecasting State of Practice Survey; and
- Version 2.2 Travel Demand Model.

The new Version 2.2 travel demand model was released in draft at the January 19, 2007 meeting. 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. Mr. Hogan 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 will be presented at the next subcommittee meeting in March.

Mr. Kirby stated that it might be worth having a fuller presentation of the Version 2.2 travel demand model at the March meeting of the TPB Technical Committee. It has features which make the estimation of VMT more sensitive to transportation network capacities and travel speeds than with previous models.

Mr. Srikanth inquired about what was driving this conclusion. Mr. Kirby replied that increased congestion in the network will cause the model to estimate persons making shorter distance trips in a given time interval. Mr. Hogan added that the revisions made to the forecast of external travel have had an impact on the estimation of VMT with this model. This will force a closer examination of Cooperative Forecasting and the CLRP, requiring them to be in better balance. Mr. Griffiths commented that there is not enough capacity in the future road network to support the previously used assumption of 3 percent per year growth in external travel. The lower average growth rate of 2 percent per year will generate different numbers in the models than have been seen in the past.

Mr. Hogan stated that the model is becoming more policy neutral. He added that sensitivity testing is presently underway to see the effect of adding road capacity in the future. He predicted that VMT will likely come back up in the out years if this condition is met. The model is therefore sensitive to this capacity, and the results from it can go either way, depending on the policy that is assumed.

Mr. Srikanth suggested that this complex technical model needs to be presented using policy language. He said that it should probably be taken to TPB because there presently is skepticism about the results obtained with it. He emphasized the need to focus on what is causing the outcomes rather than simply a description of the model structure.

**12. Other Business**

None.

**13. Adjourn**