

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

April 20, 2005

Dennis Jaffe, CAC Chair

The CAC's monthly meeting on April 14 focused on a discussion of the CapCom Incident Coordination and Communication Center, the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study and the proposal to build high occupancy/toll lanes on the Capital Beltway in Virginia. The committee approved a letter regarding the CapCom Center and a resolution on the HOT lane project, which are both attached to this report.

CapCom Incident Coordination and Communication Center

Andrew Meese of the COG/TPB staff briefed the CAC on the CapCom project. He explained that CapCom will be responsible for regionwide transportation coordination and communication on a day-to-day basis, including during major incidents. CapCom is anticipated to be part of a proposed new, larger organization, provisionally name the Mid-Atlantic Communications Interoperability Partnership (MACIP), which will deal with both transportation and public safety interagency coordination. CapCom will be housed at the University of Maryland. Mr. Meese said that the TPB and participants in the TPB's Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) task forces had agreed last year to pursue the establishment of CapCom. He said the state departments of transportation (DOTs) had written letters of support regarding CapCom. He distributed copies of those letters.

Mr. Meese described CapCom's funding situation. He said the center is estimated to need \$4.9 million for startup and operations costs for the first 18-21 months. He said that the University of Maryland had applied for federal Homeland Security funds through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). However, the COG Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Committee, which makes recommendations on the dispersal of UASI funding, at the present time had not recommended funding for CapCom. He said UASI funding may become available in the future.

Mr. Meese said that the House transportation reauthorization bill, which was approved in March, included \$2 million for CapCom. This earmark was obtained through the efforts of Congressman Jim Moran, but it still requires Senate approval. If approved, the funding will not be available until the end of the year, at the earliest. Mr. Meese said that at the March TPB meeting, a number of TPB members, including Chairman Mendelson, had called for a commitment from the state departments of transportation (DOTs) for CapCom funding. He said state agency support is under exploration.

CAC members asked whether the challenges of bringing jurisdictions together in this region are significantly different than in other places around the country. Mr. Meese answered that jurisdictions everywhere tend to be reluctant to get into shared funding arrangements. He

said this was true in setting up the TRANSCOM agency in New York, which has frequently been considered an example for coordinating incident communication.

CAC members also asked if experience in weather emergencies provided a useful model for incident coordination and communication. Mr. Kirby answered that these situations do provide useful experiences, but it was important to note the difference between unexpected incidents and those that are predictable, such as blizzards and hurricanes.

CAC Chair Dennis Jaffe noted that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 happened three and half years ago, and he said he was concerned that the process of establishing CapCom is taking so long. He said that for more than a year he has been raising concerns about the need to quickly implement emergency preparedness systems. He said that in recent weeks, he has been researching the CapCom issue. He said he had met or spoken about CapCom with the following individuals: Dan Tangherlini, DDOT Director, and Michelle Pourciau, DDOT Deputy Director; Phil Tarnoff of the University of Maryland; David Snyder, Chair of the TPB Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy Task Force; and Ron Kirby, Andrew Meese and John Swanson of the COG/TPB staff.

Chairman Jaffe said that although he had been told that the state DOTs had reached consensus about the need to establish CapCom, Mr. Tangherlini indicated that he was not yet endorsing the consensus. Mr. Jaffe expressed concerns that key decision makers had not been fully engaged.

Chairman Jaffe passed around to CAC members a draft letter addressed to key DOT and TPB officials expressing the CAC's desire that all key parties join together in a deliberative discussion to determine how to move forward expeditiously, including determining a funding solution.

The committee discussed the draft letter and suggested changes in the text. The committee agreed that the letter would be revised, per the discussions, and would be circulated to all members for comment before being finalized.

A motion to conditionally approve the letter was passed unanimously.

Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study

Don McAuslan of the COG/TPB staff briefed the CAC on recent developments in the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study, including analysis of a scenario that would significantly expand transit facilities in the region. John Swanson of the COG/TPB staff gave an introduction to the discussion, including a description of the CAC's role in initiating and monitoring the study, and launching a process of public outreach on the scenarios.

Mr. McAuslan explained that an expanded transit network had been developed to complement the "Transit-Oriented Development" (TOD) land use scenario that was tested last year. He noted that the next step in the study would be analysis of the expanded transit network with the land use scenario that increases the number of households in the region by

more than 200,000. This “Higher Households” scenario is designed to address the growing jobs/housing imbalance in the region.

In their questions, several CAC members focused on the jobs/housing imbalance. It was noted that the D.C. Office of Planning recently voted against the new Round 7 Cooperative Forecasts because of assumptions that new workers required to fill forecasted jobs will be housed on the edges of the region and outside the region. At the CAC’s May meeting, Paul DesJardin of the COG staff will brief the committee on the Cooperative Forecasting process, including a focus on the jobs/housing issue.

Members expressed concerns about the travel model’s ability to adequately forecast pedestrian trips.

A member expressed interest in the network of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) and high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes, the next transportation scenario that will be analyzed. He suggested there are two ways to approach HOT lanes – expanding capacity or using existing capacity. He said it appeared the HOV/HOT lane scenario that would be examined in the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study was largely focused on expanding capacity, but that converting existing capacity should also be examined because the results may be very different.

Approval of Resolution Regarding the Inclusion of Beltway Widening in the Constrained Long-Range Plan (VDOT)

CAC members Steven Cerny and Allen Muchnick submitted a draft resolution regarding the proposal by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to include a project in the CLRP to widen the Capital Beltway with high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes. Mr. Muchnick explained misgivings about the project, including concerns that it would not adequately support express public transit.

The resolution, which is attached to this report, asked the TPB not to add the Beltway HOT lane widening to the list of projects that will be tested for air quality conformity until reasonable available alternatives have been more fully considered.

If the TPB chooses to approve the project for air quality conformity analysis, the CAC resolution asked the TPB also to analyze, at a minimum, an additional alternative that would include two or three toll managed lanes in each direction serving expanded public transportation in accordance with the goals adopted by the TPB Value Pricing Task Force in January 2005. The resolution further stated that this additional analysis should explicitly identify effects of any proposed Beltway widening on all roads intersecting the Beltway.

A member expressed concern that the CAC in recent years had not opposed specific projects and this resolution could be setting a precedent. He said he would not want the CAC to become a forum for advocates who are interested only in “grinding an axe” by opposing or supporting specific projects.

Members supporting the resolution said this was a matter of oversight and public information, and not simply a question of opposing or supporting a specific project. They said the Beltway HOT lane project, as currently framed, was inconsistent with the goals of the TPB Value Pricing Task Force, which promote public transit as “an integral part of a system of variably priced lanes.” Another member said the CAC should not seek to avoid controversial questions and should seek to “set the bar high” for providing public information and full analysis of important issues and projects.

A motion to pass the resolution was approved with 11 “yes” votes and two members abstaining. The votes were as follows:

In support of the resolution: Steve Cerny (sponsor), Allen Muchnick (sponsor), Nathaniel Bryant, Steve Caflisch, Don Edwards, Harold Foster, Dennis Jaffe, Mike LaJuene, Jim Larsen, Grace Malakoff and Stewart Schwartz.

Abstaining: Ephrem Asebe and Emmet Tydings.

Election of 2005 CAC Vice Chairs

The committee elected Steve Cerny of Virginia and Emmet Tydings of Maryland to serve as vice chairs in 2005.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Meeting, April 14, 2005

CAC Members in Attendance

1. Dennis Jaffe, Chair, DC
2. Ephrem Asebe, MD
3. Nathaniel Bryant, MD
4. Steve Caflisch, MD
5. Steve Cerny, VA
6. Don Edwards, DC
7. Harold Foster, DC
8. Michael LaJuene, VA
9. Jim Larsen, VA
10. Grace Malakoff, DC
11. Allen Muchnick, VA
12. Stewart Schwartz, VA
13. Emmet Tydings, MD

CAC Members Not Present

Lee Schoenecker, DC
Kim Shiley, MD

CAC Alternates Present

Larry Martin, DC

Staff/Others

Ron Kirby, COG/TPB
Andrew Meese, COG/TPB
Don McAuslan, COG/TPB
Jill Locantore, COG/TPB
John Swanson, COG/TPB
Julie Ruszczyk, VDOT

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
For The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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

April 19, 2005

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

Dear Sirs and Madams:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Dennis Jaffe

Dennis Jaffe
Chair
Citizen Advisory Committee for the Transportation Planning Board

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

**RESOLUTION
OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) TO THE
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
(TPB)**

**ON CONSIDERING BELTWAY WIDENING
IN THE CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE PLAN (CLRP)**

Approved by the TPB CAC, April 14, 2005

Whereas published peer-reviewed studies by experts at the Federal Highway Administration show that the addition of two new toll lanes in each direction to the Beltway in Virginia would be much more costly and spur 12% more traffic while producing only one-third as much toll revenue, compared to the addition of one new toll lane and applying toll traffic management to two existing Beltway lanes,

Whereas these and other studies also suggest that toll traffic management of existing or new Beltway lanes is likely to be most cost-effective if a significant share of toll revenues are used to support new or enhanced public transportation services benefiting those who travel in the corridor to help manage and reduce traffic growth,

Whereas VDOT and Fluor Corporation have stated that tolls from a 12-lane Beltway widening project in northern Virginia would generate insufficient revenue to pay for the costs of the two new HOT lanes in each direction, requiring additional investment of several hundred million dollars of scarce taxpayer funds by VDOT, with no projected toll revenue available to pay for providing improved transit services in the corridor at a time when public transportation revenues are already strained in the metropolitan region, forcing fare increases and service cutbacks,

Whereas the Transportation Planning Board's Value Pricing Task Force in January 2005 adopted goals that, "transit bus service should be an integral part of a system of variably-priced lanes, beginning with project planning and design, in order to move the maximum number of people, not just the maximum number of vehicles. Transit buses should have reasonably free-flowing and direct access to variably-priced lanes from major activity centers, key rail stations, and park-and-ride lots, so that transit buses do not have to cross several congested general purpose lanes. Transit buses using the variably-priced lanes should have clearly designated and accessible stops at activity centers or park-and-ride lots, and signal priority or dedicated bus lanes to ensure efficient access to and from activity centers."

Whereas the VDOT environmental review process and the Virginia Public-Private Transportation Partnership review process for the proposed widening of the Beltway in northern Virginia have considered only a single 12-lane alternative to introduce toll traffic management in this corridor, without any serious evaluation of 10-lane or 8-lane toll traffic management options that might better support improvements to public

transportation, and reduction of adverse public health, air quality, and community impacts while boosting transportation system performance at lower costs,

Whereas the design of the proposed 12-lane Beltway widening project has not yet incorporated a full set of elements to support operation of express bus stops served efficiently by the HOT lanes, nor access for pedestrians, bicycles, and park-and-ride to such stops, nor considered whether the arterial roads that connect to the Beltway and their interchanges with the Beltway have adequate capacity for a 12-lane Beltway, and when these roads and interchanges might be expanded and by whom,

Whereas, local elected officials and the public cannot make informed choices in the absence of information about the costs and benefits of competing alternatives when road expansions of the magnitude proposed for the Beltway are advanced and when new and controversial policies such as road pricing are moved forward for implementation,

Therefore, the CAC recommends --

(1) that the TPB not add the proposed widening of the Beltway to the list of projects for testing in the CLRP until reasonable available alternatives have been more fully considered in the environmental review process by VDOT.

(2) if the TPB chooses to add the proposed widening to the CLRP network for testing, in addition to the proposed 12-lane alternative with 2 new toll lanes in each direction, at a minimum, an additional 10-lane alternative should be tested that include two or three toll managed lanes in each direction serving expanded public transportation, in accord with the goals adopted by the TPB Value Pricing Task Force in January 2005, and the analysis should explicitly identify effects of any proposed Beltway widening on all roads intersecting the Beltway.

Approved by a vote of 11 in favor and two abstaining.