

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

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**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
June 18, 2014**

Members and Alternates Present

Ron Burns, Frederick County
Rick Canizales, Prince William County
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County
Dan Emerine, DC Office of Planning
Dennis Enslinger, City of Gaithersburg
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County Executive
Lyn Erickson, MDOT
Jay Fisette, Arlington County
Tawanna Gaines, Maryland House of Delegates
Renée Hamilton, VDOT
Konrad Herling, City of Greenbelt
Cathy Hudgins, Fairfax County
Shyam Kannan, WMATA
Tim Lovain, City of Alexandria
Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Mark Rawlings, DDOT
Kelly Russell, City of Frederick
Paul Smith, Frederick County
Linda Smyth, Fairfax County
David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Tammy Stidham, NPS
Kanathur Srikanth, VDOT
Jonathan Way, City of Manassas
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County-DPW&T
Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park
Scott K. York, Loudoun County

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Gerald Miller
Nicholas Ramfos
Robert Griffiths
Elena Constantine
Eric Randall
John Swanson
Rich Roisman
Andrew Meese
Andrew Austin
Wendy Klancher
William Bacon
Ben Hampton
Bryan Hayes
Erin Morrow
Lamont B. Cobb
Debbie Leigh
Deborah Etheridge
Chuck Bean COG/EO
Matt Kronenberger COG/OPA
Judi Gold CM Bowser
John B. Townsend AAA Mid-Atlantic
Nick Alexandrow PRTC
Patrick Durany Prince William County/Supervisor Jenkins' Office
Pierre Holloman City of Alexandria
Jeanette Tejada de Gomez AAA Mid-Atlantic
Malcolm Watson FC DOT
Mike Lake Fairfax County DOT
Nicolas Ruiz Coalition for Smarter Growth
Stewart Schwartz Coalition for Smarter Growth
Maria Sinner VDOT
Jameshia Peterson DDOT
Danielle Wesolek WMATA
Bill Orleans Resident

1. Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities

No public comments were submitted at this meeting

2. Approval of Minutes of May 21 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and was passed unanimously.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Based on the handout summaries, Mr. Srikanth reported that the Technical Committee met on June 8 and reviewed four items including: 1) a briefing on the 2014 Bike to Work Day event; 2) a briefing on the implementation of the TPB Regional Priority Bus Project; 3) a discussion of changes required by new federal guidance regarding the representation of transit agencies on the TPB; and 4) a briefing on the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan required under the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program.

Mr. Srikanth also commented that staff is updating the TPB's Participation Plan, which would be an item on TPB's July agenda.

4. Report of the Citizen Advisory Committee

Ms. Loh informed the TPB that the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) received a presentation from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations regarding policy and finance issues related to the reauthorization of the federal transportation legislation Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The CAC plans to submit a resolution to the TPB requesting that the body formally adopt its own platform to address reauthorization.

5. Report of Steering Committee

Based on the handout attachments, Mr. Miller reported that the TPB met on June 6 and took four actions:

- Amended the FY 2014 work program for Commuter Connections, as requested by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to move \$50,000 from FY 2014 to FY 2015.
- Amended the FY2013-2018 TIP, as requested by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to allow additional funding for I-95/Contee Road and I-97/Randolph Road intersection projects
- Amended the FY2013-2018 TIP, as requested by VDOT and Virginia Department of Rail Public Transportation to include funding for the Innovation Station Metro Access project in Loudoun County.
- Amended the FY2013-2018 TIP, as requested by VDOT to include funding for the I-95 Northern Section Shoulder Use project.

Mr. Miller referred to Item 5, which describes letters sent/received on behalf of the TPB. He said

the TPB sent letters to the regional Congressional delegation addressing future funding issues related to the National Highway Trust Fund. Mr. Miller said the letter was a copy of one of the letters as approved by the TPB in May.

Mr. Miller referenced a letter addressed to the TPB chairman from the Council of Governments' Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC). The letter requested greater focus on CO₂ and climate change. He stated that TPB staff will brief CEEPC and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) soon on how projects and policies in the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), the TIP, and the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) affect CO₂. He said that the draft performance assessment of the 2014 CLRP will include CO₂ forecast information. He also said that staff will include air quality and climate change as emphasis areas in the draft Call for Projects for the 2015 CLRP. He said that the 2010 report on the the What Would It Take scenario, which analyzed how various transportation policies would affect CO₂, would be updated using the new 2014 EPA Moves model.

Mr. Erenrich said that based on the letter, it is not clear that CEEPC understands the role of the TPB, and that a staff briefing would provide them with clarification.

Mr. Miller agreed.

Mr. Wojahn asked when the joint meeting between CEEPC and MWAQ would occur.

Mr. Miller responded that the meeting is tentatively scheduled for July, but may not occur until September.

Mr. Fisette stated that he agreed with Mr. Erenrich regarding the need to clarify the TPB process to CEEPC.

Mr. Wojahn agreed with Mr. Fisette. He said that the transportation planning process is very complicated and that the TPB needs to act quickly to ensure that members of COG and its committees understand the process.

Mr. Miller referred to two additional topics to present to the Board. First, TPB staff received a letter from the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration approving the work program beginning in July.

Mr. Miller also referred to a letter from the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors. He said that two weeks earlier he, along with Bob Griffiths and Kanti Srikanth of VDOT, had briefed the Fauquier County Board about possibly joining the TPB. He said that because a portion of the County, including the town of Warrenton, is now classified as urbanized, the county must participate in an MPO planning process. Fauquier County received a formal letter to join the TPB in March. Mr. Miller said he expects that at the TPB's July meeting, the Board will be scheduled to approve a resolution for Fauquier to join the TPB.

6. Chair's Remarks

Mr. Wojahn updated the TPB on the status of finding a new director for the Department of Transportation Planning. He said that candidates are still being interviewed and more information would be forthcoming within the next one to two weeks.

ACTION ITEMS

7. Approval of an Amendment to the FY 2013-2018 TIP that is Exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Update Projects and Funding in the District of Columbia Section of the FY 2013-2018 TIP

Mr. Rawlings spoke about DDOT's proposed TIP amendment. He reminded Board members that it was presented at the TPB meeting in May and said that there were no comments during the 30-day public comment period.

Mr. Way asked TPB staff to describe the difference between exempt and non-exempt projects.

Mr. Griffiths responded that non-exempt projects are regionally significant and add capacity that would have an affect on the region's air quality. He said that projects that are not regionally significant or do not impact air quality are exempt from the conformity analysis.

Mr. Rawlings moved Resolution R18-2014 for Board approval.

The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. Briefing on the 2014 Regional Bike to Work Day

Mr. Ramfos said that the Washington region Bike to Work Day occurred on Friday, May 16. He said that Commuter Connections worked closely with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and the Bike to Work Day Steering Committee to raise awareness about the event. Marketing efforts were conducted via bicycle shops, websites, and on the radio. The number of registered cyclists for 2014 was approximately 17,000, a 15 percent increase over 2013. He added that this year there were 79 pit stops, seven more than in 2013. There was also \$54,000 in cash and in-kind sponsorships.

Mr. Ramfos said that there was heavy rain for most of the Bike to Work Day event. He commended Chair Wojahn for participating in the event. He noted that there were more than 120 stories in a variety of media that covered Bike to Work Day, and that the number of social media mentions on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, and YouTube increased by 110 percent over the previous year.

Mr. Ramfos said that in preparation for the 2015 Bike to Work Day, the steering committee will consider scheduling a rain date. He said that this year all registrants received an email the day before the event to encourage people to be safe and not take risks when participating in the event.

Chair Wojahn said that he appreciates the emphasis on safety, noting that biking in the rain is different than biking when it is dry. He also mentioned that Ms. Loh also participated in the Bike to Work Day. The Board applauded.

Ms. Loh said that the emphasis on safety is important, even in the rain.

Ms. Smyth noted concern about the safety of hosting Bike to Work Day in the rain when there is flooding on the region's bike paths, as was the case this year. She said that concerns about safety and flooding need to be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to cancel the event. She also mentioned that it is important to get the word out when paths and roads are flooded.

Mr. Ramfos agreed.

Mr. Emerine asked if participants in Bike to Work Day are questioned about whether or not the event influences behavior.

Mr. Ramfos responded that Commuter Connections conducts a survey every three years as part of the mass marketing TERM. In a recent survey, 17 percent of participants reported, "new to cycling" and "the event was the first time they biked to work." The recent survey also found that about 30 percent of participants increased the number of days that they biked to work.

Ms. Hudgins commented that one of the new pit stops was at Wiehle Station, in Reston. She said more than 200 people turned out to learn about the new Silver Line.

Mr. Ramfos said that he estimates one-third of the registered cyclists participated in the event.

Mr. Kannan described WMATA's efforts to encourage people to "Bike to Metro" as part of their commute.

Chair Wojahn observed that College Park had an afternoon pit stop at a Metro station. He asked about whether that was successful.

Mr. Ramfos responded that if biking to work is not an option, then biking to transit is the next best thing. He added that the number of afternoon pit stops continues to grow.

Mr. Ramfos added that on Wednesday, July 16, before the board meeting, Commuter connections is going to host a reception to celebrate Commuter Connections 40th anniversary.

9. Briefing on the Implementation of the TPB Regional Priority Bus Project under the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program

Mr. Randall briefed the Board, referring to a memorandum and an on-screen presentation. He explained that the TIGER grant was awarded to the TPB in 2010 and includes funding for 16 bus priority projects throughout the region designed to improve bus operations, customer service, and customer experience. He said that quite a lot of work was completed in the previous year, which he detailed for each of the 16 projects. He noted, however, that only 30 percent of the total grant funds have been expended to date, even though 60 percent of the grant period has passed. He explained that the five agencies responsible for implementing the projects have until 2016 to complete them and still receive federal reimbursement.

Chair Wojahn opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Way asked whether the transit signal priority (TSP) technology being deployed as part of several of the projects under the grant would interfere with ongoing traffic signal synchronization and optimization efforts, especially in the District.

Mr. Canizales echoed Mr. Way's concerns.

Mr. Randall said that the systems are designed to be able to make slight adjustments for buses and then quickly revert to the basic optimized programming.

Mr. Erenrich clarified that it does usually take a few full signal cycles for the timing to return to the basic optimized programming. He said that there are many complexities in programming the right timing algorithms and determining which buses to prioritize and when. He cautioned that the benefits of TSP can be quite small at any given intersection, but that benefits could add up across a large system over time.

Mr. Herling asked whether the region was the first in the country to be using the TSP technology described in the presentation.

Mr. Randall said that many other metropolitan areas have used this kind of technology, including Boston, Los Angeles, and Portland, Oregon. He said that this region has had several test projects before, including on Route 1 in Virginia, and on Georgia Avenue and Sixteenth Street NW in the District. He explained that the technology is rapidly evolving thanks to ongoing advances in computing and wireless communication technologies.

Mr. Kannan emphasized the importance of completing the projects in the grant focused on creating dedicated right-of-way for buses so that they can avoid traffic and provide faster service. He said that without these improvements, which will require a lot of hard work to complete by 2016, the technology improvements would not do much to improve bus performance in the region.

Chair Wojahn asked whether the TSP technology will, as part of the TIGER grant, be deployed to buses operated by local jurisdictions on the priority corridors identified in the grant.

Mr. Randall explained that the technology would only, for now, be deployed to Metrobuses operating on those corridors. He said that local jurisdictions could choose to install the same technology on their buses in order to take advantage of the TSP-equipped signals.

Mr. Wojahn also sought clarification as to why Route 1 in College Park was not included on the list of routes to receive real-time passenger information signage at bus stops.

Mr. Hamre, from WMATA's bus planning team, explained that the priority corridor plan for Route 1 had not been completed when the TIGER grant application was originally submitted in 2009. He said that a study for the corridor was completed last year and that those improvements would be able to be made in coming years with funding from the Metro budget.

Mr. Snyder asked for a separate report from staff about the progress of completing the bus priority project on Route 7 through Falls Church.

Mr. Randall agreed to provide such a report.

Ms. Smyth asked about what happens if the work under the TIGER grant is not completed by the 2016 deadline.

Mr. Randall said that the five agencies responsible for implementing the projects committed, as part of the original application process, to finish the projects by the due date. He said the agencies are working hard to spend all of the money by the deadline.

Mr. Erenrich expressed gratitude to all those working on the projects under the TIGER grant because of the great amount of coordination it requires to deploy such technologies and make such improvements. In particular, he noted the inter-jurisdictional differences in signal technology and the difficulty of creating an integrated regional system.

Mr. Herling asked what kind of performance measurement would be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the projects being implemented under the grant.

Mr. Randall explained that the grant requires a set of "before" reports and two sets of "after" reports – one a year after full implementation, and the other two years after – looking at measures like ridership, bus on-time performance, and other improvements that bus priority might yield.

Mr. Erenrich suggested that the carbon dioxide emissions reductions realized as part of such projects also be considered.

Mr. Elrich echoed Mr. Erenrich's suggestion, noting that the whole point of moving buses

through more quickly is to attract more riders and change overall travel patterns, hopefully to bend the curve of carbon dioxide emissions.

10. Briefing on the Update of the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program

Vice Chair Lovain introduced the item to the Board. He explained that the update to the Coordinated Plan being presented at the meeting was required by new federal rules under MAP-21. He explained the TPB's new role in awarding grants under the new federal Enhanced Mobility program, and noted the TPB's role in awarding grants under two previous federal programs: Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom. He said that the next step will be for the Board to approve the update to the Coordinated Plan in July so that staff can begin the solicitation for projects this fall. He noted the involvement of the TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force and its Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) in developing the plan update.

Ms. Klancher provided more in-depth information on the plan update and the new program under MAP-21. She referred Board members to a briefing memorandum and to an on-screen presentation.

Following Ms. Klancher's presentation, Chair Wojahn stressed the importance of having a vibrant application process for the upcoming Enhanced Mobility project solicitation so that the region can demonstrate to Congress how beneficial these programs are to area residents. He also sought to clarify what types of agencies and organizations are eligible for the funding available under Enhanced Mobility.

Ms. Klancher explained that 55 percent of the funds, which are to be spent on capital improvements, are available to nonprofit organizations and local governments that meet certain conditions. The remaining 45 percent of funds are much more broadly available to nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, transit agencies, and other local government agencies that might not meet the conditions for capital projects.

Mr. Kannan stressed the importance of efforts to improve mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities. He said such efforts can really benefit the region by making it possible for more people to use existing fixed-route transit services instead of relying on paratransit services like MetroAccess, which are much more expensive to operate.

Vice-Chair Lovain reminded Board members that WMATA asked the TPB to address the issue of increasing paratransit costs. He said that the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force will be holding some community forums and working with localities to address that issue.

Mr. Emerine asked whether Enhanced Mobility funds intended for capital projects could be used

to improve access to transit stops.

Ms. Klancher said that they could, but she cautioned that using federal funds for such projects could significantly increase the cost and time it takes to make the improvements.

11. Briefing on MAP-21 Guidance on the Representation by Transit Agencies on the MPO Board and the Proposed Rule on Statewide and MPO Planning

Referring to his presentation, Mr. Griffiths described the guidance and the proposed MPO planning rulemaking recently released by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to implement Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). He said that MAP-21 mandated a performance-based approach to state and metropolitan transportation planning processes. He said that FHWA and FTA also will issue interrelated MAP-21 rules in four other areas including highways safety, highway conditions, congestion and system performances, and transit performance and state of good repair. Comment on the proposed planning rule is due by September 2.

Mr. Griffiths said that the guidance requires the membership of MPO policy boards to include public transit providers. In response to the proposed guidance, he said the TPB will have to develop formal procedures that consider the needs of all eligible transit providers, including public transportation representatives, as well as a description of their roles and responsibilities. He said the TPB has always had strong transit representation on the Board, most notably through WMATA. He added that local jurisdictions also represent transit systems that they operate.

Mr. Griffiths said that the next step is to convene a meeting of all eligible transit providers and stakeholders to discuss how to respond to the guidance in September. In the longer term, he said the TPB will have to look at potential changes to bylaws and an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding on Transportation Planning Responsibilities for the Washington region.

Mr. Griffiths said that planning rule describes the transition to a performance-based approach to transportation planning. He said that on a basic level, this means that the TPB will be required to set and coordinate performance targets, and that the CLRP will need to describe those targets, evaluate the conditions of the regional transportation system in relation to those targets, and report progress towards achieving those targets. The TIP will also have to describe the anticipated effects of investment in priorities to achieve the targets.

Mr. Emerine asked about the use of scenarios under the new rules.

Mr. Griffiths responded that the TPB can continue to conduct scenario planning. He clarified that the proposed rules create an option for developing a long-range plan through the use of scenarios to identify alternative investment strategies and impacts.

Mr. Elrich encouraged the Board to view the proposed rules holistically, and consider the impact on the cost of schools, additional police stations, fire stations, and recreation facilities. He said

that it is one thing to determine how to subsidize a project, and it is a totally different exercise to determine how to subsidize all the supporting services.

Mr. Griffiths respond that these rules will specifically address transportation performance elements in terms of safety, system performance, and related measures. In terms of the large issues, he said that Region Forward and the work that the COG Board is pursuing crosses sectors, such as schools and police.

Mr. Way asked how the proposed rule might change the CLRP process or CLRP output.

Mr. Griffiths responded that the TPB will now have to set targets in coordination with the states, and show how the CLRP is either maintaining or improving baseline conditions.

Mr. Way asked if the targets will be applied to individual projects.

Mr. Griffiths replied no, the targets do not apply to individual projects. He said that they will apply to the CLRP and TIP in their entirety.

12. Other Business

There was no other business brought before the board.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 pm.