

Long-Range Plan Approval Scheduled for November 19

The region's long-range transportation plan, which must be comprehensively updated every three years, is scheduled for final approval on November 19.

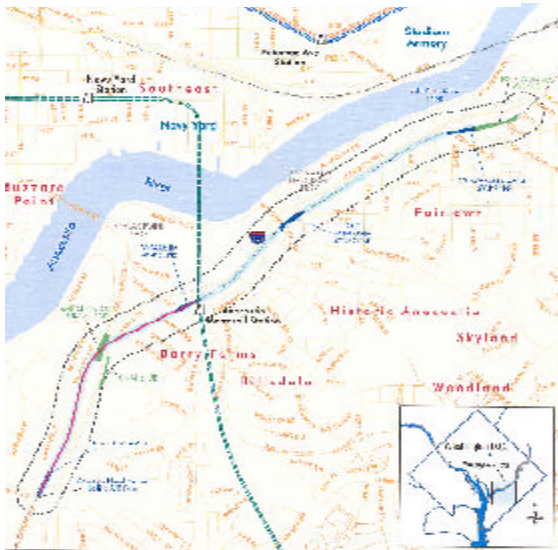
At its meeting on October 15, the Transportation Planning Board released the draft plan, along with other key documents, for a 30-day public comment period.

The following documents were released in draft form:

- **The 2003 CLRP.** The Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) is the official name of the region's long-range transportation plan. The 2003 CLRP will cover a 27-year period between 2004 and 2030.
- **The Fiscal Year 2004-09 TIP.** The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides detailed information showing which projects in the CLRP are scheduled to be completed in the next six years.
- **Air quality conformity determination.** This analysis shows that emissions produced by the

See **Long-Range Plan** on page 2

Anacostia Light Rail



The TPB amended its FY 2003-08 Transportation Improvement Program on October 15 to include funding for components of the Anacostia Corridor Demonstration project in Washington. This light-rail line will run 2.7 miles on unused CSX track between Pennsylvania Avenue, SE and the entrance to Bolling Air Force Base. Construction of the project currently is scheduled to begin in 2004, with service starting in 2005.

ICC Planning Moving Along a Fast Track

Planning for the Intercounty Connector, the "number one transportation priority" of Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich, moved forward on October 15 when the Transportation Planning Board approved amendments to permit a study of the project and funding for right-of-way acquisition.

The ICC, a project that has been discussed and debated for nearly 50 years, would link I-270 near Gaithersburg with US 1 near Laurel, Maryland. The study corridor is approximately 20 miles in length.

In a rollcall vote of 11-7, the TPB amended the region's six-year Transportation

See **Intercounty Connector** on page 4

Long-Range Plan *continued from page 1*

transportation systems included in the CLRP and TIP will be within regional emissions limits.

- **Interim CLRP and TIP.** As a contingency measure, an interim CLRP and an interim TIP have been developed in case the full CLRP/TIP approval process is delayed. These interim documents, which contain only projects exempt from air quality requirements or already underway, may need to be implemented if federal agencies do not approve the full CLRP/TIP by January 21, 2004.

Federal requirements include air quality

Under federal law, the TPB is required to comprehensively update its long-range plan every three years. In order to receive federal funding, transportation projects must be included in the CLRP and in the six-year TIP.

Projects for the CLRP are developed at the state, regional and local levels. The TPB's long-range planning process analyzes these projects as a systemwide network. The federal Clean Air Act requires this network to be tested to ensure the future transportation system will be within regional air quality improvement ceilings. This analysis is called an air quality "conformity determination."

Ceilings on transportation-related emissions ("mobile emissions budgets") were laid out in the region's air quality improvement plan, which was developed by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), an independent body at the Council of Governments. MWAQC approved this air quality plan, called a State Implementation Plan (SIP), on August 13. It was sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in early September. (The SIP is currently being revised again and will be submitted in a new form to EPA on March 1, 2004.)

The TPB's air quality conformity determination, which was released for public comment on

This newsletter is produced by John Swanson,
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239
202-962-3295; jswanson@mwcog.org
Click on "TPB News" at www.mwcog.org/transportation

October 15, found that the new CLRP and TIP are "in conformity" with the emissions ceilings in the regional air quality plan.

The schedule for federal approval of the air quality conformity determination and the full CLRP and TIP is very tight. If full continuity of the region's transportation plans and programs is to be maintained, approval of the mobile emissions budgets by EPA and subsequent approval of the TPB's air quality conformity determination, 2003 CLRP and FY2004-09 TIP by the Federal Highway and Transit Administrations will be needed by January 21, 2004. As a contingency measure, the TPB has decided to develop an interim CLRP and interim TIP that would allow federal funding to continue flowing to the region for some projects even if federal approval for the full CLRP/TIP is delayed.

Financially constrained

In addition to air quality testing, the CLRP includes a detailed financial analysis. The official name of the Washington region's long-range transportation plan—the CLRP—contains the word "constrained" to emphasize the fact that it only includes projects for which funding can be "reasonably anticipated to be available." This financial constraint is a federal requirement for metropolitan transportation planning.

The financial analysis is forecasting that \$93.3 billion in transportation funding will be available between 2004 and 2030—approximately \$3.59 billion per year. Public transit expenditures are projected to be \$56.4 billion, while highways will receive \$36.9 billion.

In general, this year's CLRP update shows that a continuing funding shortfall across the region has squeezed the number of projects that could be included in the plan. In order to draw attention to the region's unfunded transportation needs, the TPB has authorized an additional analysis that will quantify those needs for the next six years.

Officials who run the Metro system have warned they need an additional \$1.5 billion before 2010 to maintain existing infrastructure, improve system security and purchase new cars and equipment to meet growing demand.

For information on the CLRP draft, including maps and project descriptions, see www.mwcog.org/transportation. ■

Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB's November 19 agenda will include:

- Review of comments received and approval of recommended responses for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment, the 2003 Update to the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), the FY2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Project Information to Develop an Interim 2003 CLRP and FY 2004-09 TIP.
- Approval of Air Quality Conformity Determination for the 2003 Update to the CLRP and FY 2004-2009 TIP.
- Approval of the Update to the 2003 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY 2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Approval of Interim 2003 CLRP & FY2004-09 TIP in the event that action on the above two items has to be postponed.
- Certification of the urban transportation planning process for the National Capital Region.
- Appointment of nominating committee for year 2004 TPB officers.
- Briefing on the study of near-term regional transportation funding needs, funding availability, and project/program priorities.
- Report on coordination planning for regional transportation evacuation/protective actions. ■

Transportation Safety Workshop

November 20, 2003, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm
Kellogg Conference Center
Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, NE

How can we reduce truck collisions, improve pedestrian safety and curb impaired and aggressive driving? Come talk with transportation safety experts at this special COG meeting. The registration fee is \$15. For more information, see www.mwccog.org.

Public Meeting on Transit-Oriented Development



Community leaders and citizens gathered on October 7 for a discussion on opportunities and obstacles for transit-oriented development on the eastern side of the Washington region. The meeting, which was held at St. Luke's Center near Benning Road Metro, was hosted by the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee and Access for All Advisory Committee. Top picture: CAC Chair Karren Pope-Onwukwe, left, and Denton Kent of Metro, right. Middle picture: Peter Shapiro, TPB chair and chair of the Prince George's County Council. Bottom picture: Standing is Lillian Beverly, mayor of North Brentwood, Maryland.

Intercounty Connector *continued from page 1*

Improvement Program (TIP) to include \$65 million for project planning and \$79.4 million for “hardship and protective” right-of-way acquisitions. The amendment was requested by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Federal law permits hardship and protective right-of-way acquisitions to preserve potential alignments for projects under study. These types of acquisitions may occur prior to the selection of a final alternative. “Hardship” acquisitions occur when an owner shows she or he cannot sell property at fair market value because of the public’s knowledge of an impending project. “Protective” buying of right-of-way is intended to prevent imminent land development that would preclude consideration of an alternative for a proposed facility.

MDOT has estimated the ICC will cost \$1.7 billion to build. Officials hope to begin construction in 2006 and finish by 2010.

“This project was put on the books over 50 years ago to serve as a facility to meet the demands of development that was planned and has happened in those 50 years,” said Marsha Kaiser of MDOT. “What we’re doing right now is to ensure that the citizens in those areas can have adequate facilities promised through their planning activities.”

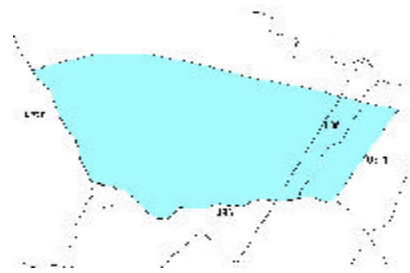
Questions about priorities

Some TPB members said that the project’s high pricetag would inevitably mean that other important projects in the region would be indefinitely put on hold. The project will be funded in part through Grant Anticipation Revenue (GARVEE) bonds. GARVEE bonds are repaid through future federal-aid funding.

Other members questioned the project’s wider impacts on the Washington region. “The bottom line is that we live in a region divided,” said TPB Chairman Peter Shapiro, speaking against the amendment. “It is a region that is clearly divided along race lines and along class lines. Why would we spend \$1.7 billion on a roadway that would exacerbate that economic divide?”

Over the years, opposition to the ICC has frequently focused on environmental issues, including potential damage to forests and wetlands. Opponents have also challenged the

ICC Study Area



The ICC study area, shaded above, includes stretches from I-270 to US 1 and covers an area south to the Beltway.

ICC’s effectiveness in reducing congestion.

Maryland Governor Ehrlich maintains that the project should be a priority and can be built in an environmentally sensitive manner. “In the Washington area, no other project can do more to reduce crippling congestion than the Intercounty Connector,” says the Governor in a written statement on the MDOT website.

Earlier this year, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta included the ICC in a list of 13 projects placed on a streamline list to receive accelerated environmental reviews under President Bush’s Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Project Reviews Executive Order. Environmental streamlining is intended to expedite the review process by requiring agencies to conduct concurrent rather than sequential reviews, set time periods for reviews and engage in a dispute resolution process to avoid delays. Under this policy, the environmental study is to be completed in two years.

Over 50 years, the ICC has been the subject of vigorous debate on how transportation planning should respond to the demands of growth, environmental protection and economic development. The project is a portion of an outer beltway that was proposed in the 1950s by the National Capital Planning Commission. In 1968, Montgomery County dropped the outer beltway from its land use plans, but retained the ICC link between I-270 and I-95/US 1. The project has remained in the Montgomery County Master Plan.

In 1983 and 1997, the Maryland State Highway Administration issued Draft Environmental

Impact Statements for the project and held public hearings, but no final decisions were reached. Former Governor Parris Glendening halted the ICC study in 1999 citing environmental concerns.

Project's new life

The project was given new life last year with the election of Governor Ehrlich. "Since Day One of the Ehrlich administration, we have been focused on restarting the Intercounty Connector," wrote the governor.

A new ICC study was kicked off in June. On October 30, MDOT proposed that two corridors be carried forward for further study. The state also announced a number of actions that could be taken to reduce environmental impacts.

In the coming year, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared containing more detailed information, including costs, on potential alignments within the selected corridors under study. The DEIS is scheduled to be released next fall. An alternative will be selected after public hearings are held.

Hardship and protective right-of-way acquisitions will be made as needed while the studies are being performed.

MDOT has planned three workshops in November to discuss the two proposed corridors that were proposed on October 30, along with a no-build option that must be studied under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. For information on these workshops, see www.iccstudy.org. ■

2004 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for membership in the 2004 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), please contact COG/TPB staff by the end of November. The TPB's public involvement process encourages candidates who "represent environmental, business and civic interests in transportation, including appropriate representation from low-income, minority and disabled groups and from the geographic area covered by the TPB." Interested candidates should send a brief statement to John Swanson, COG/TPB staff, at jswanson@mwccog.org. For more information, call 202/962-3295.

Public Outreach Meetings

Hosted by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

Should the Beltway Be Expanded With HOT Lanes?

Tuesday, November 18, 7:30-9:00 pm
George Mason High School
7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA

Citizens are invited to learn about and discuss a proposal to expand sections of the Beltway with High Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes—special lanes that could be used both by carpoolers for free and by solo drivers paying tolls.

Columbia Pike Revitalization: Can It Be a Model for the Region?

Wednesday, December 3, 7:00-8:30 pm
Arlington Career Center
816 South Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, VA

Arlington County has launched a comprehensive revitalization project, including improved transit and more pedestrian-friendly urban design, that is intended to return Columbia Pike to a more traditional "mainstreet" environment. Can these types of improvements be models for the Washington region?

Other October Agenda Items

Other items on the TPB's October agenda included:

- ***Report on recent regional transportation coordination activities during Hurricane Isabel.*** Falls Church Councilmember David Snyder briefed the TPB on the use of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS), which was established through the Council of Governments after the attacks of September 11 to provide the technological backbone for emergency contact among jurisdictions and agencies.
- ***Report on the region's revised State Implementation Plan (SIP) submission to the Environmental Protection Agency.*** A revised SIP, which is the official name for the region's air quality improvement plan, is scheduled to be submitted to EPA by March 1, 2004. ■

Calendar of Events

Dates and times subject to change. All meetings are at COG unless otherwise indicated. If you are in need of special assistance to participate in meetings, please call (202) 962-3315 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Bicycle racks are located in the parking garage at 777 N. Capitol St., NE (Enter from 1st Street).

November 2003

- November 7 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- November 7 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- November 13 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- November 14 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- November 18 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- November 18 — Commuter Operations Subcommittee (noon)
- November 18 — Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- November 18 — Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (2 pm)
- November 18 — **Outreach Meeting: "Should the Beltway Be Expanded With HOT Lanes?"**
7:30 - 9:00 pm. George Mason High School, 7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA
Meeting sponsored by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
- November 19 — **Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- November 20 — COG Regional Transportation Safety Conference (8:30 am-2 pm), Kellogg Conference Center, Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. See www.mwcog.org for details.
- November 20 — Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- November 20 — TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (12:30 pm)
- November 21 — "Real Intersection Design" Workshop, 8 am-5 pm, Riverdale Town Hall, 5008 Queensbury Road, Riverdale, MD. For information, contact Michael Farrell, 202-962-3760, mfarrell@mwcog.org
- November 21 — Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9 am)
- November 25 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) — *tentative*

December 2003

- December 2 — Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- December 3 — **Outreach Meeting: "Columbia Pike Revitalization: Can It Be a Model to the Region?"**
7:00-8:30 pm. Arlington County Career Center, 816 South Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, VA, *Meeting sponsored by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee.*
- December 5 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- December 5 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- December 9 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- December 11 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- December 12 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- December 16 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- December 17 — **Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- December 23 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) — *tentative*

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. Postage Paid
Washington, D.C.
Permit #9770