

Beltway HOT Lanes Submitted for Long-Range Plan

Six years from now, Virginia is planning to open the region's first high-occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes, which will be open to carpoolers and to other vehicles paying tolls.

As part of this year's amendments to the region's long-range transportation plan, the Virginia Department of Transportation



The Virginia DOT is proposing to build high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes on 15 miles of the Beltway. Carpoolers will use the lanes for free, while others will pay a toll. Pictured above is a HOT lane configuration on SR 91 in Orange County, California.

submitted a project to build HOT lanes on 15 miles of the Capital Beltway (I-495) between the Springfield Interchange and a point just south of the American Legion Bridge. Electronic

transponders will automatically deduct the HOT lane tolls, which will vary based on time of day or congestion levels.

The HOT lane project carries a pricetag of \$899 million and will be funded under Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995. The Fluor Daniel company, a private contractor, will arrange the financing.

Other project submissions

In addition to the Beltway HOT lane project, five other major new projects or changes were submitted for inclusion in this year's amendments to the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the fiscal

2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The new projects include a bypass around Manassas National Battlefield Park and a busway between Crystal City Metro Station and Potomac Yard in Arlington.

In order to receive federal funding, all regionally significant transportation projects must be included in the CLRP and TIP. The CLRP will cover the years 2005 to 2030. The TIP is a more detailed six-year subset of the CLRP.

See Plan Submissions on page 2

CapCom Center: Improving Coordination and Communications

Major incidents often create transportation effects that cross jurisdictional boundaries. A highway accident can cause traffic backups across county and state lines. A bomb threat can close roads and delay trains.

No regional agency is currently responsible for tracking the ripple effects of major incidents, providing consistent transportation information, or facilitating ongoing regional transportation communication and coordination.

The Transportation Planning Board is working to change this situation. Last November, the board approved a concept for establishing a center for regionwide transportation coordination and communications during major incidents.

In February the board approved a work plan for this coordination center, currently called CapCom. Operation of the center is expected to

See Capcom on page 3

Plan Submissions *continued from page 1*

Under federal law, any time the CLRP and TIP are amended, the TPB must first approve a "conformity determination" showing that forecasted emissions levels will conform to air quality improvement limits established in the region's air quality plan.

The conformity determination is based on a staff analysis that forecasts anticipated emissions over the next 25 years. Before this technical work can begin, the TPB will be asked to approve the submitted projects for inclusion in the analysis. This approval is an essential step in keeping the CLRP/TIP process on schedule. At the TPB meeting on February 16, Ron Kirby,

COG Director of Transportation Planning, explained that the air quality conformity analysis requires intensive staff effort. If the projects are changed after the air quality analysis has begun, the process could be delayed several months.

This year's CLRP and TIP, along with the final conformity determination, are scheduled for final approval in the fall.

The TPB released the CLRP/TIP project submissions for a 30-day public comment period on February 10.

Concise descriptions of the six major projects are provided below. For more information on this year's CLRP/TIP, see www.mwcog.org/transportation. ■

Proposed Significant Changes for the 2005 CLRP

- **Widen the Capital Beltway (I-495) by adding High-Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes between the Springfield Interchange and a point just south of VA 123 (Georgetown Pike).** Two new lanes will be added in each direction, widening this portion of the Beltway to a total of 12 lanes. Access will be provided directly onto the HOT lanes by separate ramps at VA 620 (Braddock Road), US 29 (Lee Highway – to and from the south only), I-66, VA 123 (Chain Bridge Road), and VA 267 (Dulles Airport Access and Toll Road). The project will be funded under Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995. Financing will be arranged by a private contractor, and therefore will not make use of traditional funding sources. HOT lanes typically are open to carpools for free or at a discount, while others pay a toll.
Length: 15 miles. **Completion date:** 2010. **Cost:** \$899 million
- **Upgrade VA 7900.** The CLRP already includes a project to build HOV lanes along VA 7900 from Rolling Road (where the Fairfax County Parkway begins) to Frontier Drive, less than one mile east of I-95. The proposed change for the 2005 CLRP would upgrade the facility to a limited access freeway, including the construction of a new interchange at VA 1220 (Neuman Street).
Length: 3 miles. **Completion dates:** 2010 (HOV); 2020 (upgrade). **Cost:** \$16 million (entire project).
- **Construct a new 4-lane roadway bypassing Manassas Battlefield Park.** The road will begin at US 29 at Luck Stone Quarry and will go north around the park, ending at the junction of I-66 and the VA 234 Bypass. Sections of US 29 and VA Business Route 234 inside the Battlefield Park will be closed to through-traffic. The existing two-lane road through the park cannot be widened for historic preservation reasons.
Length: Approximately 6-8 miles. **Completion date:** 2021. **Cost:** Not yet available.
- **Construct a new busway between Crystal City Metro Station and Potomac Yard in Arlington** to provide dedicated right-of-way for frequent bus service. The project is planned in two phases: 1) The southern portion between the Alexandria City line (south of S. Glebe Road) and 26th Street, and 2) the northern portion between 26th Street and Crystal City Metro Station. The project is designed to be upgraded to higher capacity rapid transit in 2012.
Length: A little more than a half mile (phase one); 0.75 mile (phase two). **Completion dates:** 2006 (phase one); 2008 (phase two); 2012 (upgrade). **Cost:** \$6.3 million.
- **Add auxiliary lanes to the interchange construction project at the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495) and Arena Drive in Prince George's County.** The CLRP already includes this project, which will convert the existing interchange from a part-time facility to a full-time interchange. The proposed change for the 2005 CLRP would add auxiliary lanes north and south of the interchange, between MD 214 and MD 202.
Length: Less than 2 miles. **Completion date:** 2010. **Cost:** \$29.7 million (entire project).
- **Widen MD 27 between Brink Road and Skylark Road** from 4 to 6 lanes to support proposed development in Clarksburg, Montgomery County.
Length: Less than 2 miles. **Completion date:** 2006. **Cost:** Funded by the private developer.

Citizens Advisory Committee Appointed

The TPB appointed its 2005 Citizens Advisory Committee on February 16. The committee chair is Dennis Jaffe of the District of Columbia. The members are:

District of Columbia: Don Edwards, Harold Foster, Dennis Jaffe, Grace Malakoff, Lee Schoenecker, Alphonso Coles (alternate), Lawrence Martin (alternate), Samantha Nolan (alternate), Merle Van Horne (alternate)

Suburban Maryland: Ephrem Asebe, Nathaniel Bryant, Stephen Caflisch, Kimberly Shiley, Emmet Tydings

Northern Virginia: Stephen Cerny, Michael LaJuene, James Larsen, Allen Muchnick, Stewart Schwartz

Other February Agenda Items

Other items on the TPB's February agenda included:

- **Briefing on bicycle and pedestrian priorities.** Jim Sebastian, chair of the TPB's Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee, briefed the TPB on the rationale and criteria for selecting the bicycle and pedestrian priorities identified in the Solicitation Document for this year's Constrained Long-Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. For more information on the priority projects, see www.mwco.org/transportation/tpb. See Item 8 under the February 16 meeting documents.
- **Report on the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Campaign.** Staff briefed on the board on the Street Smart program, which will launch its third campaign in April. The Board asked staff to provide a recommendation for regularizing funding for the program.
- **Review of the draft FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).** The UPWP is the TPB's work program. It begins in July.
- **Status report on staff proposals for the FY 2006 Commuter Connections Work Program.** Staff are currently considering options for restructuring and streamlining Commuter Connections. ■

CapCom *continued from page 1*

cost just a few million dollars per year—a fraction of just one moderate-size highway project—yet potentially will provide greater widespread benefits to the region. The TPB and its regional partners are looking into a variety of funding sources, including federal homeland security funds, federal transportation funding and other new grants.

Currently, when an incident occurs, the transportation agency in charge locally is largely responsible for coordinating communications with other agencies and jurisdictions. But because the local agency is busy dealing with immediate impacts it may not be able to provide ongoing information that other jurisdictions need.

CapCom will ensure that information about the impacts of regional incidents on transportation will be disseminated to the public and among transportation agencies on a timely and continuing basis. ■

March Agenda

The TPB's March agenda will include:

- Review of comments received on project submissions for the air quality conformity assessment for this year's CLRP/TIP.
- Review of comments received on the scope of work for this year's air quality conformity assessment.
- Approval of Transportation Improvement Program amendments to include 15 Maryland projects.
- Approval of the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and approval of carryover funding from the FY 2005 UPWP.
- Update on a recommended funding process for the regional pedestrian/bicycle safety campaign.
- Update on actions to improve regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents. ■

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@mwco.org
"TPB News" at www.mwco.org/transportation

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).

March 2005

- 4 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (1:30 pm)
- 10 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 11 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 15 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 15 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 16 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 18 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 22 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*
- 24 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 31 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

April 2005

- 1 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 1 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 5 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 6 Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- 12 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 14 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 19 Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- 19 Commuter Connections High-Tech Ad-Hoc Group (noon)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 26 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*

May 2005

- 3 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (1:30 pm)
- 6 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 6 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 12 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 13 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 17 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 18 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 20 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 20 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)
- 24 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*
- 26 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)

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