

Virginia Bicycling Federation

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Statement to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
by Allen Muchnick, VBF Board Member, March 21, 2012

I'm Allen Muchnick, a board member of the Virginia Bicycling Federation and a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of the TPB. I'm speaking today regarding the draft regional complete streets guidance and template, which is Item 11 on today's TPB agenda and was also the subject of a TPB work session just before this meeting.

The complete streets guidance and template before you today was developed by TPB member agency staff in response to a written Citizens Advisory Committee recommendation last June that the TPB develop and adopt a regional complete streets policy. While this resulting policy template may raise awareness of the complete streets concept across our region, it has not been crafted to be an effective TPB policy and thus is not truly responsive to the recommendation of last year's CAC.

To quote from the June 2011 CAC recommendation: "The TPB *Complete Streets* Policy should require implementing agencies to publicly report to the TPB how each project would accommodate...[various travel modes]...or document why...[those travel modes]...are irrelevant to that project. In addition, the policy should require implementing agencies to document that each project, including freeway expansion projects, would at least not degrade the level of service for pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus riders. To avoid excessive burdens, full *Complete Streets* documentation could be delayed until a project is proposed for addition to the TIP, rather than for its first addition to the CLRP." By contrast, today's draft regional policy template would do little more than encourage the region's implementing agencies to self-certify their adoption of some sort of "complete streets" policy.

The most meaningful section of today's policy template is Section V on "Documentation and Reporting"; however, rather than immediately review how TPB member agencies already comply with the policy template and rather than immediately compile recent progress on an already 17-month-old regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database, the draft document would inexplicably delay those activities for two years.

Lastly, the CAC's June 2011 recommendation, cited above, to require implementing agencies to publicly report how each project proposed for addition to the TIP would both accommodate and negatively impact various travel modes, should be explicitly incorporated into the third listed and presently vaguely worded "Documentation and Reporting" activity, before the TPB adopts the final document next month.

Thank you for considering my comments and for ensuring that future transportation projects appropriately accommodate and balance all travel modes.

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**Statement of Robert O. Chase
Air Quality Conformity Celebration Time
But Let's be Smart about It.**



**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
March 21, 2012**

There's actually good news on the transportation front... for a change.

Thanks to major technical advances mobile source emissions – particulate matter and NOx – have decreased dramatically and further out-year improvements are projected.

This is particularly impressive due to the fact that in recent decades we have added millions of people and more vehicles than people and tightened regulations. Still air quality improves.

This is good news for area residents from a regional health and mobility perspective.

It's bad news only for those that have stood at this podium over the years urging you to deny transportation projects on the fallacious premise that their air quality impacts would be catastrophic.

Scientific evidence and common sense dictated such claims were baseless but it didn't stop such claims from making headlines. Today's standards don't require claims be true, just quotable.

However, the fact that mobile source emissions are declining faster than other sources removes another excuse as to why we can't build the regional network we need.

But we must be smart about this.

There are enough uncertainties surrounding the out-years including fleet characteristics and revised federal regulations to underscore the importance of establishing the recommended safety margins.

Although science and technology may well result in even more dramatic reductions than currently anticipated, there is no reason to be reckless. Keep in mind hitting a bump in the air quality conformity process halts bus, rail and trolley projects as well as road projects.

So cause for celebration of air quality progress exists. Embrace it. Enjoy it. But do not constrain and jeopardize the region's future transportation network any more than it currently is by shaving margins below the recommended prudent levels.