

REPORT
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
March 16, 2011
Zach Dobelbower, 2011 CAC Chair

The 2011 CAC held its first meeting of the year on March 10, 2011. The committee was pleased to host TPB Chair Muriel Bowser who spoke about her priorities for 2011. Most of the meeting was spent discussing ideas for focusing our efforts this year.

Introduction to the New CAC

Zach Dobelbower introduced himself as the new CAC chair and welcomed the new committee. He noted that the group included six alternate members this year.

The Year Ahead

Much of the meeting on March 10 focused on potential activities for the CAC this year. John Swanson of the TPB staff gave a presentation on the CAC's roles and responsibilities. He emphasized the committee's involvement over the past decade in calling for scenario analysis and, more recently, pushing for a long-range Priorities Plan.

Chair Dobelbower said he believed the CAC needed to leverage the forward momentum and continue to advocate for the development of a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. He noted that the CAC's official mission includes "promoting public involvement" and he said he believed the Priorities Plan offered opportunities to conduct expanded public involvement activities.

Every member of the CAC was given the chance to identify her/his interests and goals this year. Here is a synthesis of common themes that were identified:

- ***Finalize scoping process and initiate the Priorities Plan***
 - Promote public involvement. Several members said the TPB should be encouraged to tailor a package of outreach activities to reach a variety of constituencies with different interests and types of knowledge.
 - Members also said it was important to identify a feedback loop to ensure that decision makers consider the input received during public outreach for the Priorities Plan.
 - Reaffirm and rearticulate regional goals. In describing their interests in regional transportation planning, several members spoke about the need to rearticulate these ideas to gain wider public support and enthusiasm. One member, for example, said the region needs to celebrate and promote the "freedom of mobility" that is derived when people enjoy a wider variety of travel options.

- ***Increase Public Involvement & Awareness***
 - Create a mechanism for capturing, measuring, analyzing, and improving on the goal
 - Better implement and/or improve existing outreach tools and processes

- ***Find ways for the CAC to more effectively communicate with the TPB.*** Chair Dobelbower suggested that the CAC should improve its methods for communicating with the TPB. This would probably mean that, first of all, the CAC needs to be more explicit and frequent articulating its positions. Secondly, the CAC should explore new mechanisms for sharing its positions with the TPB and with individual TPB members.
- ***Encourage more regional integration in planning.*** Members said it has been interesting to learn about various local and subregional planning activities, such as Northern Virginia's TransAction 2030, but they said it sometimes seemed that these activities lacked regional integration e.g. different light rail tracks, trains, etc. The Priorities Plan should be a way to pull these various activities together.
- ***Encourage decision makers to consider broad benefits of investments.*** Members said the TPB, in developing the Priorities Plan, should not be tied to a narrow benefit/cost approach, but instead should be encouraged to think about benefits more broadly. For example, the planning process the long-term value of public transit investments and more generally, the planning process should consider multiplier effects.
- ***Remain aware of funding challenges.*** Members said that financial shortfalls are a growing problem and the CAC should seek ways to promote solutions to funding challenges.
- ***Encourage consideration of low-cost solutions.*** Members said it was important that the Priorities Plan should not focus exclusively on large projects. They said the CAC should encourage the TPB to find a place in the priorities planning process for the inclusion of low-cost, sometimes localized, solutions, which in aggregate can provide major regional benefits. For example, a member noted that improving sidewalks and restriping roads for bicyclists are quick and relatively inexpensive ways to reduce auto-dependency, which is a regional goal.
- ***Think about outer jurisdictions in a creative and inclusive manner.*** Members suggested that many regional goals, such promoting activity centers or improving multimodal travel options, have applicability and resonance in the outer jurisdictions, but they need to be thought about in more creative ways that are sensitive to local contexts. One member spoke about opportunities for high-quality bus services linked to the Dulles Rail project. Another noted the need to encourage communities in Frederick to provide a diversity of modes as the county faces the pressures of growth.
- ***Consider promoting changes in the TPB's public comment process.*** Members said they would like to know more about the TPB's official public comment process, which includes a 30-day comment period. Members suggested the TPB might expand its Web presence including FaceBook and LinkedIn.

CAC's Continued Interest in WMATA Governance Issues

In his briefing to the CAC on the TPB's March agenda, Ron Kirby, COG's Director of Transportation Planning, said that the TPB was being asked by Maryland, Virginia and D.C. to provide research support on a selected number of topics as the governors and mayor seek to identify recommended improvements in WMATA's governance structure.

As a matter of consensus, the CAC agreed that WMATA governance remains an issue in which the committee has an active interest. Members particularly expressed concern about the need for public involvement as part of any process for changing WMATA's governance. The CAC requests that the TPB consider what role the CAC may provide as part of their research and contribution to the process.

Discussion with 2011 TPB Chair Muriel Bowser

Chair Bowser provided some information on her past involvement in transportation planning, noting that she has a professional background in transportation demand management (TDM) and she had previously worked on TPB staff. She said she was interested in finding ways to make the CAC and the TPB more effective and she welcomed efforts to make regional transportation planning more deliberate and useful.

Chair Bowser raised a couple challenges that interest her:

- ***How can we make regionalism count?*** She said she would like the process of regional coordination to produce outcomes that would be explicitly beneficial. As a major example, she cited the opportunity to use the forthcoming TPB priorities planning process to develop a package of projects that would be "TIGER-ready," i.e., ready to compete for future federal funding opportunities.
- ***How can we address equity issues in regional planning?*** For example, while noting the successes of the region's bicycle programs, she expressed concern about the relatively low bicycling rate among minority communities. She said we need to figure out ways to encourage bicycling among communities who, for various reasons, do not see it as "something for them."

CAC members' questions and comments included the following:

- ***What would it mean for the region to be more "TIGER-ready"?*** Chair Bowser said it would mean that a package of projects will have been vetted and ready for a federal application. She said she was uncertain about whether the priorities planning process, which is currently being scoped, would be the appropriate vehicle to identify such priorities quickly enough.
- ***Would TIGER-ready projects be lifted from the CLRP or would they be projects currently not in the CLRP?*** Chair Bowser said she assumed they might either be in the CLRP, but not in line for immediate funding, or possibly not in the CLRP.

- ***How can the CAC be more effective in communicating with the TPB? What formats and methods should the CAC consider using?*** Chair Bowser said that she would be listening closely to the CAC's monthly reports to identify committee concerns that need to be addressed. She also suggested that CAC members might consider attending the TPB's monthly Steering Committee meeting, which could provide an opportunity to influence the TPB's upcoming agenda. Finally recommended the CAC spend some time early in the year indentifying a couple of key issues the committee would like to address, and then seek to maintain a focus on those issues throughout the year.
- ***A CAC member suggested that the recent WMATA governance report identified some potential lessons for the TPB process itself.*** This member said that many of the working premises of the institutional structures of regional planning are out of date. As an example, he said that, in many ways, efforts to conduct regional-level public outreach are handicapped from the beginning because the existing decision-making structure. He said the WMATA governance report offered some potentially applicable recommendations for the TPB. Chair Bowser said she would like to re-read the WMATA governance report through that lens.

Other Business

John Swanson of TPB staff announced that several CAC members and alternates staff would be participating in the next session of the TPB's Community Leadership Institute on March 31 and April 2. He also indicated that staff would provide a webinar to new members with information on how the TPB process works.

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ATTENDEES CAC Meeting, March 10, 2011

Members Present

1. Zach Dobelbower (DC), Chair
2. Harold Foster (DC)
3. Kelby Funn (MD)
4. Howard Levine (MD)
5. Larry Martin (DC)
6. Stephen McCoy (DC)
7. Allen Muchnick (VA)
8. Tina Slater (MD)
9. Emmet Tydings (MD)
10. Faith Wheeler (DC)
11. Brian Winterhalter (VA)

Members Not Present

1. Maureen Budetti (VA)

2. Bill Easter (MD)
3. Madeline McDuffy (VA)
4. Fred Walker (VA)

Alternates Present

Amanda Campbell
Kimberley Kaplan
Rob Mandle
Kevin Posey

Staff and Guests

Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
John Swanson, COG/TPB staff
Deborah Bilek, COG/TPB staff
Bill Orleans, citizen