

Long-Range Plan Projects Approved

The Transportation Planning Board on May 16 approved projects for inclusion in the 2003 update to the region's Financially Constrained



Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). The projects were submitted to the TPB by state and local transportation agencies and by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which operates the Metro system.

Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson, left, joined TPB Chairman Peter Shapiro at a Citizens Advisory Committee public meeting on the Purple Line on May 20. The eastern portion of this project is included as a study in the 2003 update to the CLRP (see pages 2-3).

The approval of the project submissions represents a key decision point in the CLRP update process. The entire package of projects will now be coded and analyzed for air quality impacts. Project submissions are typically approved prior to the TPB's air

quality analysis because changes can be very time-consuming after the analysis begins.

US 50 widening in Loudoun removed

In a vote of 19 to 4, the TPB voted to remove a widening project for US 50 in Loudoun County from the list of CLRP projects. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) had requested the project be slated for construction in 2025. It would have widened US 50 from two to

four lanes along a 10-mile stretch from west of Middleburg east to Route 616 (Goshen Road).

Jim Burton, Loudoun County Supervisor, requested the removal of the project from the CLRP because it was no longer consistent with Loudoun County's comprehensive plan, which was updated in 2002 to reflect a land use policy designed to slow and better manage growth.

"We consciously decided to keep this part of the county rural, knowing full well that there are commuters who come through from the west from the Winchester area," Mr. Burton said. "The idea that this can be widened to four lanes when the money becomes available is an indication that VDOT doesn't understand the people who live out there."

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Draft Air Quality Plan Released

Regional leaders have released a draft air quality plan intended to make sure the metropolitan area meets federal health standards for ground-level ozone by 2005.

The plan was developed by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) and was released for a 30-day public comment period on May 28. The plan includes proposed ceilings on transportation-related emissions, which were developed in close cooperation with the Transportation Planning Board.

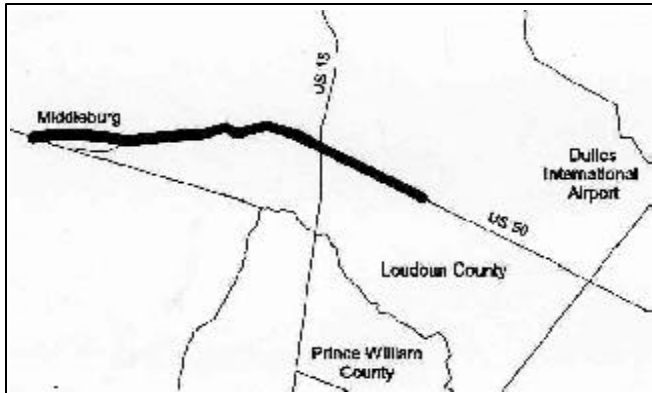
In addition to lowering vehicle emissions, the air quality plan would provide reductions in other

See **Air Quality Plan** on page 4

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Jo Anne Sorenson of VDOT said her agency had taken the county's new comprehensive plan into account, but she noted that US 50 is a primary route, carrying more than local traffic.

Sean Connaughton, chairman of the Prince William Board of Supervisors, supported VDOT. "Loudoun and Prince William used to be the outer suburbs," he said. "Now we're very quickly



The TPB voted to remove a widening project for US 50 in Loudoun County from the list of projects in the Constrained Long-Range Plan.

becoming the inner suburbs with the development that's going on to the west of us."

Chris Zimmerman of the Arlington County Board spoke in favor of removing the project. "The project is opposed in the jurisdiction. It would be a major political fight. And nobody thinks they have the money for it for the next twenty years. So let's take this opportunity to make our plans a little more realistic," he said.

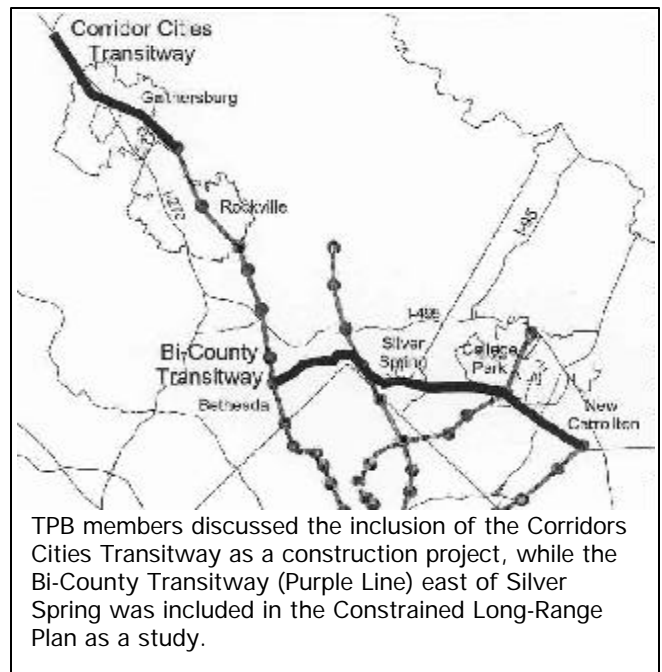
Maryland transit projects discussed

The TPB also discussed the status of transit projects in Maryland. Echoing a number of public comments, TPB Chairman Peter Shapiro said he was disappointed that the Purple Line (recently named the Bi-County Transitway) had been included only as a study—not as a construction project—for the 10-mile stretch between Silver Spring and New Carrollton. In contrast, the Corridor Cities Transitway, which would run roughly along the I-270 corridor in Montgomery County, was included as a construction project.

"I am extremely concerned that a project [the Purple Line], which serves both Montgomery and

Prince George's counties, and serves the most transit-dependent portions of those two counties is being put on the back burner," said Chairman Shapiro, who also serves as chair of the Prince George's County Council. He noted that although the Corridor Cities Transitway clearly had the support of Montgomery County's leadership, he said "it is hard to imagine what it will do to address some of these 'region divided' issues that we are all concerned about."

Marsha Kaiser of the Maryland Department of Transportation responded that "the Corridor Cities Transitway is a higher priority project because it has gone much further than the Bi-County Transitway in terms of the NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) review process and



TPB members discussed the inclusion of the Corridor Cities Transitway as a construction project, while the Bi-County Transitway (Purple Line) east of Silver Spring was included in the Constrained Long-Range Plan as a study.

a Record of Decision." [NEPA review and a Record of Decision are key steps in developing major transportation projects.]

The CLRP has included the 4.4-mile portion of the Purple Line between Bethesda and Silver Spring as a construction project since the late 90s. But the project has not moved to construction because of disagreement about the final alignment for this segment.

On May 20, the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee hosted a public meeting, in which nearly 100 citizens and elected officials expressed strong backing for the Purple Line link between Silver Spring and New Carrollton. Prince George's

Public Meeting on the Purple Line



The TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) hosted a public meeting on May 20 in Landover, Md., to discuss the status of the proposed "Purple Line" transit link between Bethesda and Silver Spring. Among those pictured above are Karren Pope-Onwukwe, CAC chair (lower left), Henry Kay, Director of Planning for the Maryland Transit Administration (above center), and Peter Shapiro, TPB chair and chair of the Prince George's County Council (above left and lower right).

County Executive Jack Johnson told the crowd the Purple Line was the county's number-one transit priority. Speakers also included Prince George's County Councilmember Tom Hendershot and Henry Kay, Director of Planning for the Maryland Transit Administration.

TPB Chairman Peter Shapiro, who chaired the public meeting on the Purple Line, reported to the TPB that "the Silver Spring-New Carrollton portion of the Bi-County Transitway has complete consensus in Prince George's County."

Federal funding tied to CLRP

Under federal law, the TPB is required to comprehensively update its long-range plan every three years. This year's CLRP update has a 27-year span, from 2003 to 2030. In order to receive federal funding, transportation projects must be included in the CLRP and in the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (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 meet regional air quality improvement goals. This analysis is called an air quality conformity determination.

In addition to air quality testing, the CLRP undergoes a 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.

At its meeting on May 21, the TPB approved a memorandum containing responses to public comments on the project submissions. To see this memorandum, go to www.mwcog.org (Go to Archived Documents for the Transportation Planning Board under Committee Business. See Item 7 from the May 21 meeting.) ■

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Air Quality Plan *continued from page 1*

sources of emissions, including power plants.

MWAQC is scheduled to approve the air quality plan on July 30. It will then be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

Both MWAQC and the TPB are independent bodies staffed by the Council of Governments. Both boards include local elected officials and state representatives. D.C. Councilmember Phil Mendelson serves both as chairman of MWAQC and vice chair of the TPB.

The Washington region is classified as a “severe non-attainment area” for ground-level ozone. In January, in response to a lawsuit from the Sierra Club, the Environmental Protection Agency bumped up this classification from a less stringent category. The region must attain federal air quality standards by November 15, 2005.

Ground-level ozone is the principle component of smog. It is formed when sunlight and high temperatures trigger a photochemical reaction between emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx).

Under the draft air quality plan, VOC emissions will be reduced 39 percent and NOx emissions will be reduced by 44.2 percent for the year 2005. These reductions use tougher restrictions on power plants to achieve major cuts in NOx emissions. Control measures are also in place to reduce VOC emissions from such basic consumer items as paint, aerosols and gas cans.

Control measures on transportation include cleaner buses, more park and ride lots and improved bicycle facilities.

The tight deadline of 2005 influenced the measures that were selected. Many potential transportation improvements, such as major new transit facilities, could not be in place by that time.

The air quality plan will feature new ceilings on on-road vehicle emissions, called “mobile emissions budgets.” These ceilings serve as the benchmarks to determine if the TPB’s Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are in “conformity” with the Clean Air Act requirements.

These new emissions ceilings are based upon the projected vehicle emissions for 2005 minus Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) included in the air quality plan. Using these new ceilings, vehicle emissions in 2005 are expected to account for approxi-



D.C. Councilmember Jim Graham, right, and Dan Tangherlini, Director of the District Department of Transportation, discussed transportation funding in the District of Columbia at a public meeting hosted by the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee on May 7.

mately 30 percent of VOCs and 48 percent of NOx.

The baselines and targets have significantly changed with this new plan because a new forecasting tool, the Mobile 6 Emissions Model, was used to calculate vehicle emissions. While mobile source NOx emissions estimates are significantly higher with the new model, VOC emissions are somewhat lower than earlier estimates.

Because these baselines have shifted so fundamentally with Mobile 6, the new draft plan emphasizes that previous estimates of emissions levels are not comparable with the new forecasts. ■

Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB’s June 18 agenda will include:

- **Approval** of the scope of work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2003 CLRP and FY2004-09 TIP.
- **Approval** of the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee’s Report: “Improving Transit Information for Limited English Speakers.” The TPB will also approve changes and additions in the committee’s membership.

- **Briefing** on the regional mass marketing program that will be launched by the TPB's Commuter Connections program. The program is considered a Transportation Emissions Reduction Measure for air quality conformity.
- **Briefing** on the TPB's Conference on Value Pricing on June 4.
- **Report** on the financial analysis for the 2003 Update to the CLRP
- **Update** on the region's draft air quality improvement plan (the State Implementation Plan or SIP) ■

Promoting Transit Information for Limited English Speakers

The TPB's Access for All Advisory Committee has issued a set of recommendations to improve transportation information for people with limited English proficiency.

The recommendations were presented to the TPB at its May 21 meeting. The board will be asked to endorse the report containing the language recommendations at its next meeting on June 18.

In its 2002 report to the TPB, the Access for All committee noted that transit information needed to be improved for the region's immigrant communities who are dependent upon buses and trains, but often are confused about how to use these systems.

In January of this year, the committee hosted a focus group which brought together more than 30 nonprofit agencies that work with people with limited English proficiency. The committee's recommendations were developed from the information gathered at this focus group and in subsequent discussions. From the beginning, representatives from Metro and other transit agencies were involved in the development of the report.

The committee's recommendations included the following key points:

- Improve existing telephone information services for populations with limited English proficiency (LEP) and advertise telephone information services more widely.
- Add multilingual greetings and options on WMATA's general information line.

- Make sure that English-language transit information is clear and concise.
- Use pictures, graphics and symbols.
- Provide written translated material in Metro stations and bus stops in heavily LEP-populated areas. Begin by making incremental improvements on a test basis at selected sites.
- Establish citizen advisory committees to help agencies reach language access goals.
- Ensure LEP individuals can understand and follow instructions in the event of an emergency.
- Provide education, training and tools for social service providers, churches and other organizations on how LEP people can use transit.
- Produce a video in various languages on how to use transit.
- Survey riders to determine which language translations are needed at which locations.
- Recruit bilingual transit agency employees.
- Provide cultural sensitivity training for transit employees.
- Implement "Try Transit Week" focusing on LEP populations.
- Improve language assistance for people with physical and cognitive disabilities. ■

TPB Alphabet Soup

CAC	-	Citizens Advisory Committee
CLRP	-	Constrained Long-Range Plan
COG	-	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
DDOT	-	District Department of Transportation
EIS	-	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	-	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	-	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	-	Federal Transit Administration
LEP	-	Limited English Proficiency
MDOT	-	Maryland Department of Transportation
SIP	-	State Implementation Plan for air quality
TCMs	-	Transportation Control Measures
TERMs	-	Transportation Emission Reduction Measures
TIP	-	Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	-	Transportation Planning Board
UPWP	-	Unified Planning Work Program
VDOT	-	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	-	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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).

June 2003

- June 3 — Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Group (10 am)
- June 4 — **Conference: "Value Pricing for Transportation in the Washington Region,"
Grand Hyatt Washington, 8:30 - 4:45 pm**
- June 6 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- June 6 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- June 10 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS)
Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- June 12 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- June 13 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- June 17 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- June 18 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- June 24 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- June 25 — **Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards Ceremony at the National Press Club,
Washington, DC, 9 am**
- June 26 — Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)
- June 27 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- June 27 — TPB Program Committee (noon)

July- August 2003

- July 8 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS)
Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- July 9 — Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Committee (10 am)
- July 10 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- July 11 — Traffic Signals and Operations Working Group (10 am)
- July 11 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- July 15 — Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- July 15 — Commuter Connections Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (8:30 am)
- July 15 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- July 15 — Commuter Operations Subcommittee (12:15 am)
- July 16 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- July 18 — Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9 am)
- July 22 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- July 24 — Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- August 8 — Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)

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