

REPORT
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
November 15, 2012
Tina Slater, 2012 CAC Chair

The CAC meeting on November 15 included discussions on the TPB's role in the new federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), the performance analysis of the 2012 CLRP, and the development of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

Follow-up Briefing and Discussion about the New Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Under MAP-21

In October, the CAC passed a resolution recommending the TPB establish a competitive regional process for selecting projects using sub-allocated funding from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), a new federal program established under MAP-21. John Swanson of the TPB staff gave an update on recent activities regarding this program.

He said that TPB staff had developed a proposal that outlined a process for project selection at the TPB level using the TAP funds sub-allocated to the Washington Metropolitan Region. He said this proposal would be presented as an information item to the TPB at the November meeting. He said that TPB staff had been in discussions with all three of the region's state DOTs to determine how to move forward.

The CAC expressed support for the TPB staff's proposed approach. The Committee expressed their gratitude to the TPB for listening to their recommendation from October. Committee members further commented that they were very happy to see the TPB moving forward in establishing a truly regional competitive selection process through TAP.

Members of the Committee also made the following additional comments regarding the proposal and the Transportation Alternatives Program generally:

- **The TAP presents a unique opportunity to fund creative solutions to our region's challenges.** It opens the door for projects that might not previously have been supported under traditional modal silos. It also provides an opportunity to advance true regional priorities.
- **The TPB should develop project selection criteria that maximize opportunities for selecting the best, most impactful projects.** One member suggested unpacking some of the broad regional goals to find those criteria that could prioritize projects with the most highly desired outcomes. The member gave as an example developing a criterion that evaluates how well a particular project connects different travel modes, not just whether it provides additional travel choices.

- **The TAP could be integrated with the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, since both are an effort to prioritize those projects that promise the greatest benefit to the region.** Several members asked what opportunities there might be to integrate TAP and the RTPP. One asked whether projects that are identified as priorities in the RTPP would have a better chance of being selected under TAP.

Briefing on an Analysis of the Region’s Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)

The Committee received a briefing from Dan Sonenklar of TPB staff on a performance analysis of the 2012 CLRP that will be included in the 2012 CLRP brochure. Mr. Sonenklar explained that the analysis has changed somewhat from previous years because it uses an updated version (Version 2.3) of the TPB’s travel demand model, which provides a finer grain of detail in analyzing travel patterns and also allows, for the first time, forecasts of non-motorized (i.e., bicycle and walk) trips.

Mr. Sonenklar highlighted findings related to: projected population and job growth by jurisdiction; travel demand (e.g., growth in vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips, and the share of trips that are commute-related); mode share for all daily trips and for commute trips; projected highway and transit congestion; changes in job accessibility; and progress toward meeting air quality targets.

The Committee asked the following questions and/or provided the following feedback:

- **Several Committee members asked questions about how the model works and its reliability, especially concerning daily mode share and commute mode share forecasts as well as the population and job growth forecasts.** Mr. Sonenklar reminded Committee members that it’s important to use the model output as a baseline against which to measure the relative effects of policy changes and/or new projects rather than focusing on the absolute numbers.
- **Committee members also observed that daily and commute mode shares aren’t projected to change much between 2013 and 2040 – that is, things will stay roughly the same.** Mr. Sonenklar pointed out that consistent mode shares indicate that the various systems, especially transit and bicycle and pedestrian, are at least maintaining their relative share over time even as population grows. He said this is a sign that those systems are keeping pace at least with growth-related demand.
- **The Committee generally agreed that the CLRP analysis paints a bleak picture for the future of the region, especially when it comes to congested highways and transit, and that significant action is needed to slow or reverse these trends.** Several Committee members stressed the importance of thinking more strategically about what transportation improvements offer the greatest potential benefit to the region.

Discussion of the TPB's Approach to Developing a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

In an open discussion of year-end business, committee members focused on the development of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. John Swanson directed the Committee to an interim report submitted to the TPB in July detailing the staff's approach to public involvement and developing strategies to be included in the plan.

A few Committee members noted that the Priorities Plan was first proposed by the CAC many years ago. They spoke about the plan's purpose and its origins in the TPB's scenario work of the early and mid-2000s. They stressed its intent as a regional plan rooted in the goals of the *TPB Vision*.

Several main themes and requests for additional information emerged from the Committee's discussion:

- **The Priorities Plan is an opportunity to prioritize those strategies that can have the greatest impact on the region's transportation system and the quality of life of the people who live here.** According to the Committee, the analysis of the 2012 CLRP shows very clearly what the future will be like under current policies and plans. Members pointed out that the purpose of the Priorities Plan, as stated in July's interim report, is "to identify those transportation strategies that best promote the TPB's goals for economic opportunity, transportation choices, system safety and efficiency, quality of life, and environmental stewardship." *Committee members called on the TPB to make sure that the Priorities Plan contains strategies that will truly make a difference in the region. They requested additional and more specific information about the process by which the "strategies that best promote the TPB's goals" will be selected.*
- **The role of the public and of public involvement in the development of the Priorities Plan is unclear.** Interim Report 2 says that a public outreach activity using a web-based tool to reach a sample of 600 participants – originally scheduled to occur this fall – will focus on "developing and vetting a more comprehensive list of challenges and potential strategies for consideration." Later outreach will help inform the selection, from a longer list of potential strategies, of those priority strategies that are widely understood and could garner broad-based public support, according to the report. *Committee members sought clarification as to the role of the public and of public involvement in the development of the Priorities Plan. Will priorities be selected primarily on the basis of the public's ability to understand and support them, or on their demonstrated ability to promote the TPB's goals and address the region's most pressing challenges?*
- **Additional transportation funding will be critical to implementing any new priority strategies above and beyond what is in the CLRP.** Some Committee members encouraged the TPB to look at strategies for raising new revenue as part of developing the Priorities Plan. One member pointed out that COG's *Economy Forward* effort calls for a Priorities Plan that identifies the region's top transportation infrastructure needs and ways to pay for those improvements. *Committee members strongly encouraged the TPB to*

consider strategies for raising new transportation revenue as part of developing the Priorities Plan.

Other Business

Pursuant to the TPB Participation Process, the CAC agreed to conduct an election by email to select six individuals (two each from D.C., Maryland and Virginia) to serve on next year’s CAC. The results of that election will be announced at the December CAC meeting. The new TPB officers for 2012, following their election in December, will each identify three individuals to serve on the 2012 CAC. The TPB will approve the entire slate of new CAC members at its meeting in January. The first meeting of the new CAC will occur in February.

Other business that came before the Committee included a staff update from John Swanson on TPB’s public involvement activities. He said that staff will be ready at next month’s meeting to present the draft “Transportation Planning Information Hub” website (previously referred to as the “Clearinghouse on Regional Transportation Decision-Making”) for CAC review and comment. He also said that Mike Farrell of TPB staff will attend next month’s meeting to provide an update on the Complete Streets Policy and how it is being implemented in the region.

Mr. Swanson also reported that planning for the Spring 2013 Street Smart campaign has begun, that Veronica Davis of the CAC has been attending the planning meetings, and that focus groups to review the new promotional materials are planned for December or January. Finally, he reminded the Committee that the TPB’s Fall 2012 Community Leadership Institute will take place on Thursday, November 29, and Saturday, December 1.

The Committee expressed its gratitude for being included in discussion for the upcoming Street Smart campaign, as it requested earlier this year.

ATTENDEES
CAC Meeting, November 15, 2012

Members Present

Tina Slater, Chair (MD)
Kelby Funn (MD)
Anita Hairston (DC)
Rob Mandle (DC)
Larry Martin (DC)
Allen Muchnick (VA)
William Soltesz (VA)
Stephen Still (VA)
Emmet Tydings (MD)

Members Not Present

Maureen Budetti (VA)
Veronica Davis (DC)
Bill Easter (MD)
Krystle Okafor (MD)
Jeffrey Parnes (VA)

Alternates Present

Justin Clarke (MD)
Tracy Hadden Loh (DC)
John Epps (MD)
Fred Walker (VA)

Staff and Guests

John Swanson, COG/TPB
Ben Hampton, COG/TPB
Dan Sonenklar, COG/TPB
Christine Green, Safe Routes to
School National Partnership
Bill Orleans, citizen
Lee Schoenecker, citizen