

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
April 18, 2007
James Larsen, CAE, CAC Chairman

The April 12 meeting of the CAC included an update of TPB staff's recent public involvement activities, discussion on upcoming TPB agenda items including project information for the 2007 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), and a briefing and discussion on the development of the new TPB Public Participation Plan.

Mr. Jim Larsen asked for nominations for Vice-Chair of the CAC. Mr. Allen Muchnick made a motion to nominate Mr. Martin vice-chair of the CAC for the District of Columbia. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The committee agreed to elect a vice-chair for Maryland at its meeting in May.

Update of TPB Staff's Recent Public Involvement Activities

TPB staff member John Swanson provided the CAC with an overview of recent public involvement activities. These included a March 22 presentation of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario (RMAS) Study to a forum sponsored by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizen's Associations in Reston, VA., and a similar presentation at Leadership Alexandria on March 7. CAC members provided input on contacts and organizations for future presentations of the RMAS Study.

Mr. Swanson said that in response to a CAC request, a joint meeting between the CAC and the Metropolitan Development Planning Committee Citizen Advisory Committee will be scheduled later in the year.

Project Submissions for the 2007 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP)

CAC members discussed extensively the approval of project submissions for the 2007 CLRP (TPB Agenda Item 7). Some members spoke specifically against the projects submitted to the TPB for approval, while others were concerned about the process of including projects in the CLRP. Because of these procedural concerns, Mr. Swanson directed the members' attention to the January 2006 "CAC Recommendations on Improving Information and Analysis for the CLRP and the TIP," which provided specific comments on public involvement processes at the TPB. He suggested the committee might want to revisit these positions and statements when discussing procedural issues related to the CLRP planning process.

CAC members developed a resolution (attached) that recommends the TPB review the CLRP planning process to ensure ample public and technical consideration of the projects occurs before they are placed in the CLRP.

Comments from CAC members including the following points:

- ***Adequate examination of alternatives?*** A member felt several projects were submitted prematurely, including the I-66 Spot Improvements and the I-95/I-395 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes projects. Specifically regarding the I-66 Spot Improvements, he said there have been no alternatives presented and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has not conducted adequate public hearings on the project.
- ***Conversion vs. new capacity.*** Members expressed concern about whether the TPB and regional leaders have adequately investigated the distinctions between converting existing HOV lanes to HOT lanes compared to constructing new sections of roadways for use as HOT lanes.
- ***Off-cycle CLRP.*** A member expressed concern about including such high-profile projects in an off-year amendment of the CLRP.
- ***Effective input in decision making.*** Members discussed the fact that most projects are formulated before they come to the TPB. They wondered how the implementing agencies might more fully include the TPB, citizens, and interest groups in the project development process. CAC members discussed possible methods for including citizens in this process.

Street Smart Campaign

CAC members discussed in detail the “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign (Item 11). Mr. Swanson told the committee that TPB staff is proposing to expand the campaign from once yearly to twice a year, with outreach efforts occurring during fall 2007 and spring 2008. Funding levels are currently below what will be needed for this expansion. He noted that in the past some member jurisdictions have not contributed their recommended allocations for this effort and that the Arlington County Board has issued a statement saying they will double their FY 2008 contribution if all TPB member jurisdictions contribute their recommended amounts for FY 2008. The Arlington County Board said the campaign should be implemented with full funding; otherwise they believe the campaign would not be as effective as individual jurisdictional efforts, and Arlington would not provide funding to the campaign.

CAC members developed a resolution (attached) supporting the campaign and recommending the TPB adopt the staff proposal for funding an FY 2008 expanded campaign and that each TPB member jurisdiction contribute their share of the funding for this program.

Comments from CAC members including the following points:

- Members expressed appreciation for the statement by the Arlington County Board offering to double its FY 2008 contribution towards the Street Smart Campaign if all member jurisdictions contribute their suggested FY 2008 contribution.
- Members felt it important that the CAC act in support of this campaign so this message is more visible throughout the region.

Briefing and Discussion on the Development of the New TPB Public Participation Plan

Mr. Swanson detailed the process for updating the 1999 TPB Public Involvement Process, which is required per federal regulations under the transportation funding bill, SAFETEA-LU. TPB staff will develop a Public Participation Plan during the spring and summer of 2007. Mr. Swanson said the consultant evaluation of the TPB's current public involvement activities will be complete in May and available for CAC members to review.

Darren Smith of the TPB staff discussed staff's approach for including public input in the development of the Public Participation Plan. Staff will meet with TPB Committees, as well as conduct focused group discussions with interest groups. Mr. Smith led CAC members through a brainstorming session to discuss constituencies that should be included in Plan development. He asked CAC members for input about how to reach significant constituencies and how the TPB may be most effective in garnering feedback on the Participation Plan.

CAC members generally agreed that TPB public involvement activities should be tailored to specific types of constituencies that are involved – or should be involved—with the TPB. Committee members said they look forward to continuing this discussion.

Other Business

John Swanson of the TPB staff announced several items:

- Fairfax County Supervisor Cathy Hudgins, Chair of the TPB, will attend the May CAC meeting to discuss her vision for the TPB and public involvement in the transportation planning process.
- An outreach meeting on the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study will be held at a forum in Alexandria, VA, on April 17 starting at 7:00 pm at the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson Street. Another presentation is scheduled at the regular meeting of the Frederick Area Committee on Transportation on May 14 starting at 8:00 am at Winchester Hall in Frederick, 12 East Church Street.
- The committee welcomed Jazmin Casas, who will be with the TPB staff for four months under the Management Training Program of the Federal Highway Administration.

ATTENDANCE
CAC Meeting, April 12, 2007

Members in Attendance

1. Jim Larsen, VA, Chair
2. Larry Martin, DC, Vice-chair
3. Steve Caflisch, MD
4. Stephen Cerny, VA
5. Harold Foster, DC
6. Grace Malakoff, DC
7. Robin Marlin, DC
8. Allen Muchnick, VA
9. Alexandra Simpson, VA
10. Emmet Tydings, MD

Members Not in Attendance

1. Nathaniel Bryant, MD
2. Merle Van Horne, DC
3. Daniel Malouff, VA
4. Todd Reitzel, MD
5. Jahantab Siddiqui, MD

Staff/Others

Jazmin Casas, COG/TPB/FHWA
Sarah Crawford, COG/TPB
Darren Smith, COG/TPB
John Swanson, COG/TPB

**Resolution of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Transportation Planning Board:
Supporting the Street Smart Campaign to Help Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety**

WHEREAS, the Street Smart Campaign is an educational campaign, directed at motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists, with the goal of reducing pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and deaths; and

WHEREAS, the Citizens Advisory Committee finds that to be effective the Street Smart Campaign requires attaining a certain threshold of region-wide public awareness that is only possible with an adequate commitment of resources by the TPB; and

WHEREAS, the Citizens Advisory Committee finds particularly exemplary the letter from Arlington County offering to double its FY 2008 contribution to the Commuter Connections program on the condition that other TPB jurisdictions meet their suggested FY 2008 contribution share.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Citizens Advisory Committee urges the TPB to adopt the staff proposal for funding of the FY 2008 campaign, to include for the first time two phases, one in Fall 2007 and one in Spring 2008, and urges TPB member jurisdictions to meet or exceed their suggested contributions, thus meeting the challenge issued by Arlington County.

Approved by the CAC by unanimous vote, April 12, 2007

CAC Resolution on CLRP Public Process and Procedural Problems, and Recommendations

The CAC expresses concern that projects continue to be submitted for inclusion in the CLRP without thorough public participation and without thorough analysis of alternatives and the impacts of the project, whether favorable or unfavorable.

Specifically, the CAC:

1. Reiterates its recommendation that the TPB should ask the implementing agencies to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen—either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional (Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and D.C.) level or by enhancing existing subregional meetings/events. [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 8].
2. Reiterates its recommendation that the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study should inform project selection. [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 9].
3. Reiterates its recommendation that in summarizing and responding to public comments, staff should, among other things, “...take a broad view instead of a narrow technical view of the TPB’s responsibility in dealing with the CLRP.” [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 4]. The CAC believes the TPB’s concerns should (a) include, but should go beyond, whether submissions technically comply with legal requirements and (b) include an evaluation process of each project submission so as not to eliminate or negate consideration of public input but to incorporate public response as much as it can be permitted.
4. Urges that, absent compelling justifications, projects should not be included in the CLRP before the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study and other analyses of alternatives have been completed.
5. Expresses concern with avoiding environmental and alternatives analysis and meaningful public input by characterizing as spot improvements projects that are fundamentally oriented toward capacity expansion.
6. Expresses concern with any processes, including public/private partnership processes, that do not disclose to the public and public officials all significant information regarding a proposed project.

Examples of projects that inspire these concerns include the proposed “spot improvements” of I-66 and the proposed HOT lanes on I-95/395.