

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Technical Assistance Application Recommendations for the Pilot Round of the Transportation / Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program

DATE: March 15, 2007

Background

The TPB established the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program in October 2006 as a 6-month pilot program that will be conducted through June 30, 2007. The TLC Program is designed to provide support to local jurisdictions as they deal with the challenges of integrating land use and transportation planning at the community level, and to share success stories and proven tools with local governments and agencies across the National Capital Region. There are two major components of the TLC Program: the Regional Clearinghouse and the Technical Assistance Program. The Technical Assistance Program will provide focused consultant assistance to local jurisdictions working on creative, forward-thinking and sustainable plans and projects.

TLC Technical Assistance Program

The deadline for applications for the TLC Technical Assistance Program was February 28, 2007. Staff received 22 applications for assistance; 1 application was from the District of Columbia, 10 were from Virginia, and 11 were from Maryland. Please refer to the attached spreadsheet for information about the scopes of each project.

The TPB has allocated \$250,000 for the TLC Program, including funding for the Regional Clearinghouse, the Technical Assistance Program, and program administration. The TPB anticipates funding the Technical Assistance Program at a level of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2007. Recipients are eligible to receive technical assistance up to a value of \$20,000 for a project.

Technical assistance will be provided by consultants who will be contracted on an individual project basis. On March 7, 2007, COG/TPB issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to seek consultant support for these technical assistance activities. The deadline for responding to the RFQ is March 23, 2007. Following this deadline, COG/TPB will develop a list of pre-qualified consultants to provide technical assistance. Using this list, COG/TPB will work with jurisdictions to identify potentially appropriate firms, organizations and individuals to provide the approved technical assistance, and will seek quotes and availability from consultants to determine who should be contracted to conduct the service or task in accordance with the required schedule.

Application Evaluation Methodology

The TPB anticipated funding five applications in the pilot phase of this program, with broad representation from member jurisdictions and a diversity of project type. Because this is the first round of applications, the TPB views this current selection effort as a pilot for an anticipated permanent program. The TPB believes it is important to fund applications in this pilot round that address a variety of transportation and land use issues that have the potential for a region-wide impact.

TPB staff developed a qualitative evaluation process for reviewing the applications with the help of a consultant team from Reconnecting America, which has been contracted to assist with the establishment of the TLC program. Staff first reviewed the internal deadlines of each project and the feasibility for project completion by the end of the current fiscal year (FY2007), which ends on June 30, 2007. After staff reviewed projects exhibiting a readiness to proceed, they examined the projects based on other important factors, including timing and cohesion with other local and regional efforts, the likelihood a project could be completed under \$20,000, the impact a project could have on a locality and the region, and potential lessons to be learned from a project and applied around the region.

The TPB is planning to fund this program into the future and plans to initiate a second phase of the program after the end of the fiscal year. For this reason, staff felt it was important to select projects that address a variety of transportation and land use challenges for implementation in the pilot program in order to test the effectiveness of the program. Staff reviewed applications to ensure balanced representation from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. Project selection was also driven by the distinctiveness of the jurisdictions themselves – representation from outer suburbs was important, as was addressing the needs of inner suburbs and the regional core areas.

Summary of projects recommended for funding in the Pilot Program

With the concurrence of the TPB officers, staff has narrowed the 22 applications to 5 they believe should be funded as part of the pilot program, as well as an additional public presentation project intended to have region-wide application. TPB staff recommends the following projects be provided with technical assistance during the pilot round of the TLC Program:

- Montgomery / Prince George's Counties, Langley / Takoma Parks Pedestrian Study
- St. Charles Urbanized Area, Urban Roads Standards
- Fairfax County, Levels of Service around Transit Oriented Development
- Prince William County, Scoping Assistance for BRAC Impacts
- District of Columbia, Potomac Avenue Metro Station Area Scoping
- Public Presentation on Density Issues for use in response to applications by College Park, Greenbelt, Manassas Park, and Takoma Park, and/or other jurisdictions as requested

The remaining applications showed strong potential for inclusion in future rounds of funding. These applications include projects that address streetscape design along primarily vehicular-oriented corridors, studies to examine the effectiveness of bus rapid transit, more studies on the impact of the BRAC decision, and other related topics. Brief summaries of the recommended projects are

provided in the following sections. Please refer to the TLC link on the MWCOG website for the complete applications.

Maryland

Montgomery / Prince George's Counties, Langley Park / Takoma Park Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Study

This project is a joint effort between Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, implemented through the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The application is for assistance in preparing a pedestrian safety and mobility study to support planning efforts for the Takoma/Langley Park Crossroads Sector Plan. The goal of the Crossroads Plan is to produce a joint bi-county plan that will enhance the unique character of this diverse, multi-cultural community and implement both counties' existing General Plan recommendations for mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented development opportunities in support of a proposed Purple Line transit station.

The requested study will present findings and recommendations that enhance pedestrian safety and mobility patterns in the context of the future Purple Line transit station at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and University Boulevard (MD 193). The pedestrian safety element should develop the pedestrian environment as a community system of interwoven pathways, sidewalks, and open spaces with an emphasis on improving mobility and safety at this intersection.

This project is novel in that it is a joint effort between multiple jurisdictions and provides a connection between the two communities. The resulting study will contribute to the development of the Crossroads Sector Plan (scheduled to begin September 2007). This project is representative of inner suburban challenges in a diverse area and will propose ways to fix a dangerous pedestrian area.

St. Charles Urbanized Area, Development of Urban Roads Standards

St. Charles Urbanized Area is requesting assistance for the development of urban roads standards for two sub-areas. Sub-Area Plans for both focus areas, Bryans Road Town Center and Waldorf Sub-Area, have been adopted and are now part of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Part of the vision for these communities is the creation of a complete road network that increases connectivity for motorists, integrates transit, and is accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. The County's current road standards do not allow the flexibility to implement the type of road and streetscape design needed to transform these areas into compact, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly areas. County staff have received training on context-sensitive design in order to promote greater understanding of this effort.

Technical assistance is requested to assist County staff with functional and thoroughfare type classifications for both existing and proposed roads in the St. Charles Urbanized Area according to context-sensitive design principles. Elements of the urban design for these sub-areas would include roadways with on-street parking, several examples of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and alley designs. These classifications would be incorporated into the County Road Ordinance and Design Specifications for this area.

The project is the next logical step following the recent completion of the sub-area plans for this part of the County and building upon context-sensitive design training received by staff in December 2006. The project would assist these communities in creating dense suburban communities with the intent of alleviating traffic congestion and providing alternate means of transportation for residents and visitors. This project could be an example for other outer jurisdictions facing congestion and growth, providing them with useful information.

Virginia

Fairfax County, Levels of Service around Transit Oriented Development

Fairfax County is amending its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate a locally recognized definition of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which they believe to be a key component of a growth management strategy. In concert with this effort, the County requests assistance in addressing the acceptable level of congestion within a TOD and on roads adjacent to a TOD, in hopes of balancing the experiences of pedestrians, transit and vehicular traffic.

The County requests assistance to investigate how this particular issue has been addressed by other jurisdictions around the country and around the region. While a review of literature and best practices will be valuable, the central task is to define how vehicular congestion should be addressed within and adjacent to TODs.

This project complements the County's recently adopted TOD policy by analyzing the impacts of this type of development on all modes of transit in and around a TOD. It will address the need for more dense development, while understanding potential limitations on transportation. TPB staff believes the information produced through this project could be transferable to jurisdictions across the region.

Prince William County, Scoping assistance to address BRAC Impacts

Prince William County is preparing a request for funding from the Department of Defense (DOD), Office of Economic Assistance, to evaluate and address the wider-ranging community impacts from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decision. Prince William requests scoping assistance to address land use and transportation impacts in the county's Potomac Communities area, which is located between the Marine Corps Base at Quantico and Fort Belvoir. Both installations will experience a significant increase in staff as a result of the BRAC.

Assistance from the TLC Program would be used to define and refine the county's proposal to DOD for a study. This TLC-sponsored scoping effort will examine issues such as which commuter corridors should be studied, where land use changes might be most effective, and how additional transportation alternatives should be incorporated into the Potomac Communities. Subsequently, the DOD-funded study would provide recommendations for the update of the Potomac Communities Revitalization Plan and changes in land use and transportation in this area.

This project contributes to a proactive effort on the part of Prince William County to address impacts on land use and transportation resulting from the BRAC proposal. The deadline for the application to the DOD is May 15, 2007, which emphasizes the urgency of this application. Results from the

scoping project and the larger DOD study could be transferable to other jurisdictions dealing with this issue.

District of Columbia

Potomac Avenue Metro Station Area Scoping

The Office of Planning is seeking technical assistance in developing a scope of work that will build on previous planning efforts around the Potomac Avenue Metro Station, set realistic goals and objectives for future planning efforts, and allow the Office of Planning to garner legitimacy for future plans from the public. The Office of Planning will develop a neighborhood plan for the area surrounding the Potomac Avenue Metro Station, hoping to improve and increase the utilization of this transit station. In addition, the Office of Planning intends to address housing and commercial development around the station, as well as improvements to adjacent public spaces.

Previous efforts include a Community Charrette that was part of the 2004 American Planning Association's Convention in Washington, DC. Planners from this organization met with community members during a day-long workshop to establish a focused framework for revitalization. They addressed pedestrian and transit enhancements, as well as improvements to the public space surrounding the station and along Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, and Potomac Avenue, SE.

As written, the proposal would likely extend beyond the \$20,000 limit for the TLC program. Staff will assist the Office of Planning to focus the project on key aspects of the scoping assistance they require. This project will address infill development in an urban environment, particularly with respect to the revitalization of public space surrounding the station. It is believed that the pedestrian experience will be enhanced, which will in turn attract commercial development to the area.

Public Presentation

Several jurisdictions proposed public education presentations as part or all of their proposals. Coincidentally, many were focused on how to plan for creative development solutions around some type of transportation facility, whether it is at a major intersection, a transit station, or along a corridor. These applications represent a regional need for information and communication resources about in-fill development and other activity center core development options. Therefore, a sixth project is proposed for inclusion in the TLC Pilot Program. A consultant will be hired to develop a basic presentation on how to incorporate density into a variety of places, as well as preparing a briefing on issues each municipality has addressed. The consultant will offer the presentation once in each of the following jurisdictions:

- College Park specifically requested a public presentation in its application. The city seeks to better understand the role of density in the city's revitalization process and to determine appropriate density levels for various segments of the Route 1 corridor.
- Greenbelt also requested public involvement that focuses on modes of transit in the Greenbelt community, with future development around the Greenbelt Metro Station highlighted as a community concern.

- Manassas Park submitted an application for planning assistance with a public involvement component with the goal to better integrate mixed-use and transit-oriented development in a small jurisdiction with limited resources. While this is an important project that could be appropriately funded in future phases of the TLC Program, Manassas Park could currently benefit from a presentation of options for development around a transit station.
- Takoma Park requested technical assistance for the development of a series of workshops designed to provide the community with the expertise needed to evaluate future development and in-fill projects.