

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

May 14, 2009

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the April 15th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the April 15th TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the May 20th TPB agenda.

Attachments



Metropolitan Area Transportation
Operations Coordination

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Buddy Ey
MATOC Facilitator

DATE: May 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Update

Background

By action of the TPB Steering Committee at its May 1 meeting, the May 20 MATOC presentation to the TPB has been postponed and rescheduled for June 17. At that time MATOC will provide a presentation to the TPB that focuses on MATOC's readiness for operations including the MATOC Concept of Operations, staffing plan, timetable, and outstanding funding issues. It is anticipated that MATOC will also provide a summary of its meetings with the MATOC Executive Committee members. The planned April 27 joint meeting of the Executive Committee was cancelled due to schedule conflicts, and individual meetings are being scheduled instead. In lieu of a May 20 TPB presentation, this memorandum provides a written update on the MATOC activities during the last month.

MATOC Operations Activities

The MATOC Program continues its Trial Phase, with full implementation scheduled for July 1, 2009. MATOC continues to monitor incidents for regional impact and relays information and provides situational awareness to its stakeholders. MATOC has added a number of recipients to the MATOC Situational Awareness distribution list, including key WMATA bus supervisors and Northern Virginia transit managers and dispatchers. Since its last report, MATOC has made notification to the complete distribution on 3 incidents and has made notification to impacted agencies on 11 additional incidents. MATOC also participated in hot wash activities following the April 23rd incident at the 3rd Street tunnel entrance.

MATOC Steering Committee

The MATOC Steering Committee continues to meet regularly to discuss planning and budget issues as well as subcommittee items relating to Operations, Information Systems, and Public Information. At its April 21 meeting, the Steering Committee approved motions for MATOC physical location, hours and staffing, and IT support. As a result the steering committee will



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recommend to the MATOC Executive Committee that MATOC be located at the CapWIN facility, with operators (in addition to the MATOC Facilitator) to support 16 hour operations, Monday through Friday. The Steering Committee will provide a final recommendation once the Executive Committee members have an opportunity to weigh in on the project.

Outlook

The individual meetings with the Executive Committee members will be an important opportunity for discussion of finalizing and sustaining the MATOC Program over the long term. In the meantime, MATOC Trial Phase activities continue, and the subcommittees continue to identify best practices and incorporate them into the program. The June 17 TPB presentation will provide a full update on these issues.

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May 7, 2009

The Honorable Jim Moran
2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
2453 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Moran and Ruppersberger:

I am writing to express the support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for the **Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Transportation Operations Improvement and Research Program** as a High-Priority Project (HPP) for the upcoming surface transportation authorization legislation.

Background

In 2005, under the leadership of Virginia Congressman Moran and with the strong support of the TPB, SAFETEA-LU funding was obtained to initiate development and implementation of the MATOC program. MATOC works to improve the collective ability of National Capital Region's transportation agencies to coordination and to share information when incidents with regional impacts occur. In addition to COG/TPB, the agencies working together to build MATOC include the Virginia, Maryland, and District of Columbia Departments of Transportation as well as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). A multi-state/agency agreement formalizing the establishment of MATOC has been executed, creating MATOC a regional independent entity of its "owner" organizations, guided by a Steering Committee of its member transportation agencies (as noted above). COG/TPB staff provides administrative support to MATOC.

Since the fall of 2008, MATOC has been ramping up real-time operations, with a dedicated regional facilitator undertaking information review, notifications, training, and other operational coordination activities. The MATOC facilitator was able to play an effective role in regional interagency transportation information sharing and coordination during the recent Presidential Inauguration, as well as in numerous routine but major traffic incidents in the region in recent months. Even in these initial stages, the MATOC program and facilitator are proving to be welcome and effective partners to the region's transportation agencies as they manage their systems and incidents.

Next Steps

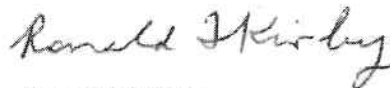
Now that the MATOC program has been established and shown initial success, additional operational enhancements, as well as university-based applied research and technical assistance for MATOC, have been identified. The proposed MATOC Operations Improvement and Research HPP has been developed in close coordination with the Virginia, Maryland, and District of Columbia Departments of Transportation, WMATA, and COG/TPB, with assistance from the transportation research programs of the University of Maryland and the University of Minnesota. The proposal focuses on a number of long-held priorities of the TPB, including enhanced transportation systems monitoring, traffic signal optimization, emergency preparedness, and traveler information; these are logical next steps in the continuance of this important program.

To date, MATOC has received 80% of its support funding from the SAFETEA-LU federal grant, with 20% state matching funds provided in equal shares by the Virginia, Maryland, and District of Columbia Departments of Transportation, and we anticipate that this funding arrangement will continue under an HPP grant. COG/TPB will be happy to continue to administer the program, either with grant funding provided directly from the U.S. Department of Transportation to COG/TPB, or through one of our state departments of transportation.

Outlook

Overall, we feel that the MATOC program is an outstanding potential HPP. Its impact will be felt across the entire National Capital Region and extensively in Virginia and Maryland. MATOC bolsters transportation efficiency, safety, and security through integration of existing transit and transportation management data in the region, and provides for the quick and reliable exchange of transportation system information among operating agencies. We applaud the efforts of our region's transportation agencies to improve their own interagency coordination activities, and look forward to continuing to work with them as we achieve additional improvements to the coordination and management of transportation systems and incidents in our region through MATOC.

Sincerely,



Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Memorandum

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Catherine M. Hudgins
Chair, TPB Access for All Advisory Committee
Supervisor, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: General Comments on Transportation-Related Concerns of the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee

DATE: May 13, 2009

The Access for All Advisory (AFA) Committee received a presentation on the significant changes to the Draft 2009 Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) at its February 23, 2009 meeting. In contrast to previous years, there are no significant new projects proposed for this year's CLRP update; instead most of the changes for the 2009 CLRP update will delay the completion dates of projects already in the plan.

Therefore, the AFA had few comments on projects in the plan, but during a roundtable discussion raised the following transportation-related concerns about how low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities may be impacted by the economic downturn.

The AFA is concerned about the expense of Metrorail fares for individuals with limited incomes.

- AFA members stated that Metrorail fare is simply too expensive for many people with limited incomes, including people with disabilities and older adults. As a result, people are taking only buses, becoming more isolated, and/or cannot afford transportation to and from work.

WMATA should target more free SmarTrip cards to low-income individuals, seniors and persons with disabilities; more education and outreach about SmarTrip is also needed.

- WMATA eliminated paper transfers on Metrobus in January; this elimination has caused low-income individuals to be burdened with a double fare since many folks cannot afford to purchase the \$5 SmarTrip card.

This document is available in an alternative format upon request. Please contact Rex Hodgson at rhodgson@mwco.org, (202) 962-3275 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Allow 7 working days for preparation of the material.

- AFA members stated that in addition to low-income individuals having trouble paying for the \$5 SmarTrip card, these individuals also cannot afford the \$5 to replace their SmarTrip card.
- The AFA applauded WMATA's efforts to distribute free SmarTrip cards to disadvantaged population groups; however, more SmarTrip cards should be distributed and targeted to low-income individuals.
- In addition, WMATA should expand education and outreach to low-income communities, seniors and people with disabilities about the use of SmarTrip, Senior SmarTrip and Reduced Fare SmarTrip cards, and encourage them to utilize other currently available services provided through the Reduced Fare and Free Ride programs.
- AFA members commented that outreach and training on SmarTrip cards to seniors needs to consider that it may take longer for older adults to understand how to use the cards. Additionally, the Senior SmarTrip card should be made easier to obtain by expanding the number of locations where they can be acquired.

The AFA is concerned with how budget shortfalls will impact vital language access services.

- AFA members recommended that WMATA's budget for language access services should not be decreased. Members expressed a concern that Limited English Populations (LEP) could become even more disenfranchised if this happens.
- AFA members also expressed that non-profits can partner with transit agencies to provide greater access to transit services for their members, but these non-profits often lack the resources needed and these partnerships require funding to succeed.
- A recommendation was made that transit agencies should prioritize the translation of critical documents especially since "machine" translation is not always accurate.

The AFA is also concerned about possible reductions in MetroAccess service.

- AFA members expressed concern that the budget shortfall may result in reductions to the service area covered by paratransit services, which could occur if WMATA changed its current policy to one which strictly limits MetroAccess service only to areas within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed bus route, and if bus service to outer areas, such as Clarksburg, is eliminated.
- Many MetroAccess riders have limited incomes and are having difficulty paying the MetroAccess fare, particularly if more than one trip is needed in one day.

Bus Service is critical to mobility.

- AFA members stated that not only should transit agencies maintain current bus service but additional bus service is needed to better serve the transportation needs of people with disabilities, low-income communities and minority communities, particularly to accommodate non-traditional work hours.
- AFA members stated that these population groups often have to take several buses to reach their destination which is very cumbersome.
- AFA members reiterated that many people with limited incomes, including people with disabilities and older adults, rely solely on bus service to meet their daily travel needs.
- AFA members noted that maintaining and improving bus service is critical to people with disabilities able to ride buses since this service is more flexible and less expensive than MetroAccess.

The AFA supports coordinated land use and transportation planning.

- AFA members support the coordination of transportation and land use planning across the region so that transit and walking are viable options to satisfy more of the travel needs of people with disabilities, low-income communities and minority communities.



May 14, 2009

The Honorable Charles A. Jenkins
Chairman, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: Enhanced Regional Bus Network

Dear Chairman Jenkins:

Last Fall, Metro staff presented to the TPB a plan for a Metrobus Priority Corridor Network (PCN) that targets investment in some of the most heavily-used transit corridors in the region. More recently, Metro staff has been working closely with TPB members and staff to develop a regional bus network proposal to include in a grant application for Federal ARRA stimulus funding. The regional bus network would include a package of bus improvements such as bus lanes and roadway improvements that improve the speed and reliability of bus service.

I am transmitting to you a resolution adopted by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors on April 23, 2009 endorsing the concept of an enhanced regional bus network that would provide priority improvements to bus service. The WMATA Board has directed staff to actively support the TPB's efforts at securing federal funding for the bus network and to take a leadership role in advocating for bus priority improvements that benefit all transit providers in the region.

I firmly believe that by strengthening Metro's partnership with the TPB, this regional effort will allow us to secure funding and provide needed transit improvements in some of the region's busiest corridors.

Sincerely,

John B. Catoe, Jr.
General Manager

Attachment

Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority

600 Fift St NW
Washington DC 20001
202/982-1244

By Approval
Jeffrey Squam Red Line
Debra Price Chairman
Ron Greenwald
Wanda Lewis

Adaptor of Delights
Michael and Virginia
Eason Partnership

SUBJECT: ENHANCED REGIONAL BUS NETWORK

PROPOSED
RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors has endorsed a list of projects seeking funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support high priority infrastructure improvements on the Metrorail, MetroAccess and Metrobus systems to be implemented by Metro; and

WHEREAS, The Metrobus Priority Corridor Network is viewed as a critically needed component of a future enhanced regional bus network that will include a true family of bus services – ranging from local bus routes and circulators, up to long-distance express bus routes operating on the regional High Occupancy Vehicle and freeway system; and

WHEREAS, Defining the scope of regional transit investments requires Metro to assume a leadership role to ensure that recommendations encompass projects, services and facilities of regional importance and priority; and

WHEREAS, The 24 Priority Network Corridors selected for planning and implementation over the next six years are a priority for bus running-way improvements because they represent nearly half of Metrobus ridership and a significant portion of the current bus service investment; and

WHEREAS, Metro staff has been working closely with the Transportation Planning Board members and staff to develop a proposal for a regional grant application for Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funding including a package of bus improvements such as bus lanes and roadway improvements that improve the speed and reliability of bus service that benefit Metro and other transit service providers; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors directs Metro staff to take a leadership role on behalf of Metro in developing a regional application for bus prioritization investments under the Federal economic stimulus legislation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors defines this leadership role to include advocacy not only for Metrobus services but also improvements of regional significance that benefit Metro and other transit service providers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors conveys to the Transportation Planning Board its support for the development of a regional application for enhanced regional bus projects, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol B. O'Keeffe", is written over a horizontal line.

Carol B. O'Keeffe
General Counsel

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

May 7, 2009

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

As you undertake the reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation programs, I am writing to express the support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for the proposed improvements of the Union Station Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) Project.

A set of public/private projects is proposed to rehabilitate and modernize the transportation facilities at Union Station, enhancing its status as the premier ITC in the District of Columbia and as a model for the nation. The improvements will also preserve options for future transportation modes for our region.

Union Station not only serves as a multimodal transportation hub for the Washington region and Northeast Corridor, but also as a destination tourist site for visitors from throughout the nation. Originally built as an intercity train station, Union Station now serves over 100,000 passengers per day via 14 modes of transportation, in addition to the thousands of shoppers and tourists. This influx of commuters, long distance travelers and tourists yields extreme congestion and inefficiency, particularly during peak travel periods. And ridership through the station, particularly on Metro, VRE and MARC continues to grow.

Many improvements are planned to reduce congestion in and around the station and to facilitate passenger flow, as well as to accommodate continuing growth in ridership. In conjunction with the development of the Air Rights located directly adjacent to the

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
The Honorable John L. Mica
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station, some of the proposed improvements include upgrades to the existing rail concourse and construction of a new concourse which will alleviate passenger congestion and facilitate seamless transfers between Amtrak, MARC, VRE and WMATA. Also among the proposed improvements are enhanced pedestrian access in and around the station, additional access for Metro passengers, location of an intercity bus terminal at the station, alleviation of various "choke points" in the facility, and security features.

Rehabilitation of and improvements to the Union Station ITC are the next logical steps in the evolution of this facility based on its success as a heavily utilized multimodal hub in the Washington region's transportation network. With transit and rail ridership continuing to grow, we believe that improvements to this national treasure are important for the nation, but also critical in meeting our regional transportation demands, now and in the future. We are aware that the District Department of Transportation is conducting a feasibility of some of these proposed improvements and we look forward to the implementation of their recommendations.

Sincerely,



Ronald F. Kirby
Director of
Transportation Planning

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

May 12, 2009

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

I am writing to express the support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for high priority transportation and infrastructure projects in NoMa ("North of Massachusetts Avenue"), through the upcoming reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation. NoMa is an emerging neighborhood in Washington DC, located between Union Station, at the south end, and the high traffic corridor of Route 50/New York Avenue, Northeast, at the northern end. The newly constructed Gallaudet/New York Avenue Metro Station, also located in NoMa, has been the catalyst for an ambitious redevelopment plan. In the next ten to fifteen years, NoMa will witness an astounding 21 million square feet of mixed-use development, including: 8,000 apartments and condominiums; 1,200 hotel rooms; 11 million square feet of office; and nearly 1 million square feet of retail. Planned private investment totals \$7 billion with over \$1.5 billion invested to date.

As the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, the TPB is acutely aware of the continuing need for public investment in transportation infrastructure in NoMa in order to ensure that the vision of a truly walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood is achieved. Given the large number of current and future federal workers in NoMa (FERC, DOE, HUD, BLS, ATF, EEOC, DHS, DOJ), these infrastructure investments will significantly improve the neighborhood's safety as well as accessibility for the federal workforce as well as local Washington, DC residents.

The funding priorities for NoMa include:

1. **NEW YORK/FLORIDA AVENUE INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS:** The TPB recently awarded a grant to the NoMa Business Improvement District to fund conceptual designs for pedestrian and wayfinding enhancements at the New York Avenue Intersection in order to improve safety and connectivity around one of DC's most dangerous intersections. Federal funding is needed for implementation of those design recommendations.
2. **FIRST STREET DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:** Much of the planned new development in NoMa will be along First Street, NE, the neighborhood's future "main street" and a critical link to Union Station and Capitol Hill to the south and New York Avenue to the north. Funding is needed to support the redesign and reconstruction of First Street to achieve multi-modal transportation access, safety and connectivity; build sustainable or "green" infrastructure; and design and construct high-quality public spaces.
3. **METROPOLITAN BRANCH TRAIL:** The Met Branch Trail is an 8-mile bike trail that will connect the National Mall through NoMa to Silver Spring, Maryland and tie into a regional bike and trail network. The District Department of Transportation completed Phase I, in 2004, but additional funding is needed to complete the trail and create an urban and environmental amenity for the Northeast neighborhoods adjacent to the trail.
4. **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN:** In light of the future growth in NoMa, a multi-modal plan is needed to manage transportation congestion and mitigate potential conflicts between multi-modal users of the neighborhood, while supporting environmental objectives and lowering carbon emissions. A multi-modal study is needed to better connect the Metro stations to other transit modes including Metro Bus, Circulator, bicycle paths and future street car expansion.
5. **UNION STATION ENHANCEMENTS:** Federal funding is needed to support and enhance the region's most important, inter-modal transportation facility, which cannot adequately service its 80,000 daily users including commuters, residents and tourists. Union Station needs significant renovations and enhancements to increase accessibility, manage congestion, expand pedestrian access on First Street, accommodate the Greyhound Bus Station and other public transit operators, and become a true 21st Century, multi-modal transportation hub.
6. **UNDERPASS REPAIRS:** The K, L, M and Florida Avenue railroad underpasses are important pedestrian and vehicular connections between the Capitol Hill neighborhood and NoMa and the New York Avenue Metro. The underpasses have suffered from years of deferred maintenance and their current condition present real health and a safety hazards. Funding is needed to repair spalling concrete and water leaks, remediate lead based paint and improve pedestrian lighting and safety.

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
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I appreciate the opportunity to express the support of the TPB for these important transportation projects that will make the Nation's Capital a better, safer and greener place to live, work and visit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald F. Kirby".

Ronald F. Kirby
Director of Transportation Planning

CC: Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton



ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Zipcar's service has had a significant, positive impact on the environment and local communities. According to a recent member survey, drivers who use Zipcar as an alternative to owning a car ultimately spend less time behind the wheel and, in many cases, have surrendered ownership of their vehicles or have halted their purchasing decision.

Each Zipcar takes more than 15 personally owned vehicles off the road.¹

Nearly 200,000 Zipcar members share 5,500 vehicles in more than 50 cities throughout the UK and 26 North American states and provinces, including operations in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, London, New York, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver, and Washington DC. Recent surveys indicate that more than 40% of members would have kept their vehicle, or would have purchased a primary or secondary vehicle, if Zipcar did not exist.¹ To date, Zipcar estimates it has taken more than 50,000 vehicles off the road.

This results in less congestion on the roadways and fewer greenhouse gas emissions and particulates. Older cars are replaced with new Zipcars that have more stringent pollution controls, preserving green space because fewer parking spaces are required to meet the needs of the same number of people.

Since each Zipcar takes approximately 15 cars off the road, less land and financial resources are needed to provide parking infrastructure.

Government agencies, University officials and real estate developers have told Zipcar that each new parking spot can cost from \$35,000-\$50,000 to develop. M.I.T. provides students and faculty access to more than 20 Zipcar vehicles; because of Zipcar and other transportation demand management initiatives the school reports savings of more than \$9 million, adding over one million square feet of new office space without a single new parking space.²

Zipcar members drove 5295 miles/year prior to joining Zipcar. The average Zipcar member currently drives only 1,068 miles/year.³

Having to walk a block or pay for a vehicle by the hour or day changes driving and personal behavior patterns. It also results in decreased fuel consumption and urban emissions. Each Zipcar member consumes approximately 220 gallons of gasoline less than when they owned their own vehicle, resulting in significant oil conservation.³

Members of Zipcar and car sharing programs report a 46% increase in public transit trips, a 10% increase in bicycling trips and a 26% increase in walking trips.⁴

Zipcar is part of the urban transportation mix. With Zipcar, members are more likely to take advantage of all methods of transportation. Zipcar members use cars only when they need to, and often walk or bike more, resulting in healthier residents.

For more information, visit www.zipcar.com

¹ Zipcar Inc. (2005) *Zipcar member behavior survey*, Cambridge Mass.

² Zipcar Inc. (September, 2006). "Zipcar Expands Nation's First Car Sharing Program for Universities with Addition of Seven New Schools". Retrieved 2008, <http://www.zipcar.com/press/releases/press-53>

³ Zipcar Inc. (2006) *Zipcar member behavior survey-fuel*, Cambridge, Mass.

⁴ Washington Metro Area Transit Authority, (2005) *Washington Metro Transit Authority Car Sharing Program Survey*, Washington DC.