NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD June 19, 2013

Members and Alternates Present

Monica Backmon, Prince William County

Melissa Barlow, FTA

Marc Elrich, Montgomery County

Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County

Lyn Erickson, MDOT

Jason Groth, Charles County

Rene'e Hamilton, VDOT

Cathy Hudgins, Fairfax County

John D. Jenkins, Prince William County

Emmett Jordan, City of Greenbelt

Shyam Kannan, WMATA

Julia Koster, NCPC

Carol Krimm, City of Frederick

Tim Lovain, City of Alexandria

Phil Mendelson, DC Council

Mark Rawlings, DC-DOT

Linda Smyth, Fairfax County

David Snyder, City of Falls Church

Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning

Todd M. Turner, City of Bowie

Jonathan Way, Manassas City

Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County

Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park

Scott K. York, Loudoun County

Sam Zimbabwe, DDOT

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Ron Kirby

Nicholas Ramfos

Andrew Meese

Eric Randall

John Swanson

Jane Posey

Andrew Austin

Rich Roisman

Deborah Kerson Bilek

Sarah Crawford

Ben Hampton

Bryan Hayes

Debbie Leigh

Deborah Etheridge

Michael Farrell

Mark Moran

Dusan Vuksan

Chuck Bean COG/EO

Paul DesJardin COG/DCPS

Judi Gold Councilmember Bowser's Office

Katrina Tucker Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Thomas McCartin WSTC/MDOT

Crispus S. Gordon, III DC Council – Phil Mendelson

Jameshia Peterson DDOT Stuart Whitaker Fairfax

Mike Lake Fairfax County DOT

James Schroll Arlington
Bill Orleans Citizen
Randy Carroll MDE

1. Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities

There were no public comments before the TPB.

2. Approval of Minutes of the May 15 Meeting

Ms. Krimm moved to approve the Minutes from the May 15 meeting. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Ms. Erickson said the Technical Committee met on June 7 and reviewed six of the items on the TPB agenda, including the proposed slate of projects to be funded under the FTA JARC and New Freedom Programs; the results and summary of the May 17th Bike to Work Day event; and the draft 2013 CLRP and the conformity analysis results for the 2013 CLRP and TIP, which she said are both out for public comment right now. She said the committee was briefed on a draft outline of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan as well as the next steps towards its proposed adoption in September, and received a status update on the projects associated with the TIGER grant that the TPB is administering. She said that, in addition to the TPB agenda items, the Committee was also given a status report on the development of the Region Forward Coalition's Regional Activity Centers strategic development plan, and received a brief update of ongoing efforts by the traffic signal subcommittee of survey results on traffic signal optimization in the region. She added that the committee discussed a proposed D.C. budget item which targeted regional commuter bus services, but said that this issue is no longer outstanding.

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Still said that the CAC met on June 13, and received an update on the results of the Bus on Shoulder Task Force. He mentioned that the CAC expressed interest in the connections between the work of this task force and the TPB Aspirations Scenario. He said that the CAC also received a briefing on the Activity Center Strategic Development Plan, held a focused group discussion on the COG website in preparation for a planned website update, and received an update on the progress of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. He added that he hopes the CAC will be able to expeditiously get comments together on the priorities plan and present some first impressions to the TPB at its July 17 meeting. He emphasized that the CAC would like to remain engaged throughout this project.

Ms. Tregoning pointed out that the TPB Aspirations Scenario appears in at least one of the scenarios of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, and said that the scenario also highlights the importance of land-use.

5. Report of the Steering Committee

Mr. Kirby referred to a flier that was distributed publicizing an event titled, "Economy Forward: One Year of Progress" which will be held on September 27 at the National Press Club. He said this event will highlight the progress on the Activity Center Strategic Development Plan and the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, two initiatives that have been developing along parallel time tracks within COG. He added that the purpose of the meeting would involve integrating these two initiatives under one agenda.

Mr. Kirby said that the Steering Committee met on June 7 and acted on four resolutions, including: concurring with redesignation of the newly aligned segment of I-370 in Maryland;

adding funding to the FY2013-2018 TIP for intersection improvements on Maryland 355, Job Access and Reverse Commute, and New Freedom Transit Programs; adding funding to the FY2013-2018 TIP for two interchanges and an acceleration/ deceleration lane on I-66, widening of Route 50, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities associated with the I-495 HOT lanes, as requested by VDOT; and amending the UPWP to modify some tasks for the District of Columbia Technical Assistance Program.

Mr. Kirby summarized the contents of the letters packet, including: a letter from the U.S. Department of Transportation acknowledging the TPB letter regarding recommendations on performance measurement in MAP-21; a letter from District of Columbia Mayor Gray to the FTA designating the TPB and COG as the recipients for the new 5310 program under MAP-21; a COG resolution supporting Momentum, WMATA's strategic plan; and an approval notice that the TPB received from FHWA and FTA on the conformity determination on the 2012 Constrained Long Range Plan.

6. Chair's Remarks

Chair York mentioned that a serious accident had occurred in the District, which he acknowledged might have caused arrival delays of some TPB members. He said he hoped for the best for the pedestrians involved in the accident.

ACTION ITEM

7. Approval of the CY2013 Projects for Funding Under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Amendment of the FY2013-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the projects.

Mr. Wojahn said the he chaired the two selection committees to develop recommendations for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs, and said that a slate of ten projects is being recommended for funding. He provided a summary on the selection process and projects.

Mr. Wojahn mentioned that this would be the last year that the TPB will fund projects under the existing JARC and New Freedom programs, and that the ten recommended projects will expend the remaining funding for these programs. He said that moving forward, the TPB will be working under MAP-21, the current federal surface transportation legislation, which eliminated the JARC program and combined the New Freedom and the old Section 5310 program into a new Section 5310 program, for which the TPB is expected to serve as the designated recipient. He added that this program would provide funding for transportation services for people with disabilities and older adults, and that he would be working with the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force in the fall to prepare for the first solicitation of this new program, which it is anticipated will occur in early 2014.

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Mr. Wojahn stated that the recommended slate of ten projects was developed by two independent selection committees, which scored 13 applications based on criteria previously approved by the TPB. He mentioned that the selection committees were geographically balanced, and included representatives from public transit, work force development, disability rights, and human services transportation organizations. He acknowledged the dedication and service of the selection committee members, including Kermit Kaleba of the D.C. Workforce Investment Council, Caroline Jeskey of the Community Transportation Association of America, Steve Yaffe with Arlington County Transit Services, Ricky DeGrafenreid of the Maryland Transit Administration, Susie McFadden-Resper of the D.C. Office of Disability Rights, and Jeanna Muhoro of the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services Human Service Transportation Division. He also thanked TPB staff Wendy Klancher and Beth Newman for their dedication and hard work.

Ms. Klancher, referring to a PowerPoint Presentation, explained that there is a total of \$1.3 million in federal funds of JARC available, and \$728,000 in New Freedom, and that these grants require matching funds: 50 percent for an operating project and 20 percent for a capital project. She provided an overview of the solicitation process for the JARC and New Freedom programs, including advertising for grant applications, pre-application conferences, and developing solicitation priorities. She summarized the recommended projects, and added that if these projects were approved, the TPB would have funded 69 projects totaling over \$23 million since the programs' inception.

Ms. Klancher outlined next steps, including administering the remainder of the projects under these programs until they are complete, and beginning to implement the MAP-21 Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility program, which will include reviewing the federally required coordinated plan to review the selection criteria for this program and conducting a solicitation between January and April 2014. She added that the FY2013 amount allocated to the Washington DC Urbanized Area under this program is \$2.8 million.

Mr. Way asked for clarification on the sources for matching funds that are required under this program.

Ms. Klancher responded that the agencies use a variety of funds to provide the required match, which can include but are not limited to general revenue or in-kind expenses.

Mr. Wojahn moved to adopt Resolution R18-2013 to approve the CY-2013 projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs, and to amend the FY-2013 to 2018 TIP to include those projects.

Mr. Zimmerman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. Briefing on the 2013 Regional Bike to Work Day

Mr. Ramfos provided a briefing on the May 17 Bike to Work Day event that was held throughout the region. Referring to a presentation, he summarized examples of marketing strategies for the event, including regional advertising on the radio and in newspapers, interviews and press releases, and the use of the Internet. He mentioned that the event website is jointly managed by the Washington Area Bicyclists Association and the TPB. He showed images of event T-shirts, which he said were distributed to approximately 12,000 cyclists. He also showed some images from the event itself that featured different pit stops and participating elected officials.

Mr. Ramfos credited the Washington Area Bicyclists Association and thanked their staff for developing graphics for the event, which he exhibited to the board. He said that overall, there were 14,673 registered riders at 72 pit stops, which exceeded the original goal. He added that the majority of the registrants came from Virginia, followed by D.C., and then by Maryland. He listed the top 25 pit stops, and acknowledged the corporate sponsors for the event, including Bicycle Space, who donated bicycles. He concluded by stating that overall, the event brought in a record-breaking cash total of nearly \$50,000, which is a 6.5% increase over the previous year, as well as in-kind sponsorships of 17,450, which exceeded last year's total by 13%.

Chair York asked if data existed to show the number of people who commute to work via bicycle on an average day.

Mr. Ramfos replied that, as part of the program, a survey would be conducted on participants to ascertain the frequency of cycling. He said that at least 17% of the cyclists that have participated in this event who have never biked before would start bicycling, and that regional numbers would be available through the State of the Commute Report.

Chair York suggested surveying people at future events to get an indication of whether better facilities would affect participants' willingness to commute to work by bicycle.

Mr. Ramfos said that a follow-up survey would be conducted in the fall, and can include specific questions. He said TPB staff would work with TPB members to identify such questions.

Mr. Zimmerman praised the event, and acknowledged the good weather contributed to the success. He mentioned that there were some active pit stops for the evening commute as well as the morning commute, such as the one in East Falls Church.

Mr. Ramfos said the event had several afternoon pit stops.

Mr. Zimmerman said that the TPB sometimes faces difficulty in dealing with concerns of people who do not view cycling as transportation. He said data is not historically collected on bicycling in the way it is for vehicles, and added Arlington has started using automated counters, which he said has resulted in round-the-clock data collection. He said that the marginal impact of adding

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or subtracting vehicles could have a significant impact on congestion.

Ms. Hudgins remarked that one of the greatest demands the region faces is the demand to connect places with good arteries, such as the W&OD trail. She added that the addition of pit stops to the event each year is an indication of the demand for cycling facilities, and added that developing data to support this phenomenon could contribute to decision-making that promotes alternatives.

9. Briefing on the Draft 2013 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)

Mr. Austin provided a presentation on the draft 2013 CLRP. He said the draft CLRP and air quality conformity analysis were released for a 30-day public comment period at the June 13 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. He reviewed the proposed significant changes and additions to the CLRP, about which he provided details at the February TPB meeting. He reviewed four alternatives for a project providing western access to Dulles Airport. He said the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be required to select an alternative prior to approval of the 2013 CLRP.

Chair York said Loudoun County is having discussions with VDOT about an additional alternative for that project and asked if that would affect the analysis.

Mr. Kirby said staff would have to review the specific details for the alternative and that if there is a significant change, staff would have to remodel the alternatives.

Chair York said he would speak with TPB staff after the meeting.

Mr. Austin continued with his presentation and highlighted two additional project cost changes that were submitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). He said the TPB would normally also release a TIP for public comment, but that the TIP is on a two-year cycle and that this is the off-year. He said the TPB would handle any TIP amendments as requested. He said the TPB would be asked to approve the 2013 CLRP at its July 17 meeting.

Mr. Erenrich said the project cost of the Corridor Cities Transitway was reduced because the governor chose the locally preferred bus-rapid transit option, which is less costly than the previously assumed light rail option.

Ms. Smyth noted the 30-day public comment period, but added that it has come to her attention that people who are possibly greatly impacted by these projects still do not know about the projects. She said that it complicates matters that the projects are not defined as of yet, but that significant impacts may not be known until the engineering is complete. She asked what the TPB is doing to publicize the 30-day comment period.

Mr. Austin said staff places ads in local newspapers and posts notices online. He said

information is sent via an e-mail distribution list that includes about 800 people and that the information is released to the CAC.

Chair York asked if staff is working with the local public information officers (PIOs) to make sure the information is distributed locally.

Mr. Austin said staff has not traditionally sent the information to the PIOs.

Ms. Smyth said that part of the problem is that the information is merely a list of projects and does not include specific information about who may be affected.

Mr. Zimmerman referred to item four under the Virginia projects, related to the Capital Beltway HOT lanes conversion from two to four lanes. He asked for clarification about how that would fit into the existing express lane facility.

Ms. Hamilton said it was part of the original HOT lanes proposal and that it is not going to be completely immediately. She said VDOT is requesting to amend the date into the future.

Mr. Zimmerman said the draft CLRP said the project would be complete in 2014, which seems to be different that amending the date into the future. He also asked why that particular segment would be four lanes when there are only two lanes on either end, and how the transition would work from four to two lanes.

Ms. Hamilton said this project would help address congestion that is occurring on the express lanes facility and use the shoulder as an extension of that facility. She said it is a \$20 million project.

Mr. Zimmerman said the draft CLRP identifies the project as \$100 million to be completed in 2014.

Ms. Hamilton said she would have to clarify the financial information.

Mr. Zimmerman confirmed that the improvement would use the space that is currently available in the shoulder. He also asked if it would be funded from toll revenues.

Ms. Hamilton said it would use the shoulder. She said she would confirm the funding and noted that there might be a mistake in the information provided.

Mr. Snyder said the Route 7 widening project between I-495 and I-66 is on the edge of Falls Church and highlighted the importance of coordination between the City and Fairfax County.

10. Briefing on the Draft Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2013 CLRP and FY 2013-2018 TIP

Ms. Posey provided a presentation on the air quality conformity analysis conducted for the 2013 CLRP. She said staff revalidated the version 2.3 travel demand model to account for changes in travel trends since the 2007-2008 Household Travel Survey, the data upon which the travel demand model had been based. She summarized changes and trends in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), namely that VMT per capita is decreasing in the region with the largest percentage decrease occurring in the outer jurisdictions. She said TPB staff modified the travel demand model to reflect the changing trends by increasing non-motorized trips along with other refinements. She said the changes to the travel demand model tracked with actual 2012 data. She summarized the output of the revalidated model for the 2013 CLRP accounting for each alternative in the VDOT Dulles Airport access project. She reviewed the data for VOC, NOx, fine particles pollution, and direct PM through 2040. She said the TPB will be asked to approve the conformity analysis at the July 17 meeting.

Mr. Elrich asked how staff could be sure that the trend is not merely reflective of unemployment due to the recent recession as opposed to an actual reduction in driving. He said that Montgomery County is still at almost twice the historical norm for unemployment.

Ms. Posey said it is not clear what is causing the downward trend in VMT per capita and that staff will continue to watch that trend.

Mr. Elrich noted that the recent drop in employment has also been historic. He suggested running a model that assumes stable employment as well as a model that include recent numbers for unemployment.

Mr. Kirby said the model does not assume that VMT will never grow again. He said staff has simply dropped the growth line to reflect the recent unprecedented plateau experienced over the past five to six years. He said that if the economy picks up and it turns out much of the change in VMT was due to economic factors, we may see VMT start to rise again. He noted that it would take an extraordinarily strong recovery to get back to the trend line established previously.

Ms. Posey said that staff is also using the new Round 8.2 Cooperative Forecast for the first time this year. She said recent employment trends are accounted for in the forecast, but that the Round 8.2 estimates for 2040 are virtually identical to those included in the Round 8.1 Cooperative Forecast.

Mr. Erenrich said that the process of listing all assumptions is an annual exercise. He said this is an opportunity to review trends and see if the assumptions that were previously used are still valid.

11. Briefing on the Draft Outline of the TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

Referring to the draft outline that was distributed in the mailout, Mr. Kirby said that staff was currently writing a draft of the RTPP, which would be distributed in the next TPB mailout and handed out at the CAC meeting on July 11. He said that a TPB work session would be held prior to the TPB meeting on July 17 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the draft. He described the sections of the outline, including the origin and background of the plan, and challenges, goals and strategies that will be described in the plan. He said the draft will include results from an online survey of 600 residents of the region.

Referring to a one-page handout document, Mr. Kirby described the schedule for completing the RTPP. He said that following the TPB meeting on July 17, staff will revise the document, which will be released for a 30-day public comment period between July 24 and August 24. A final draft is scheduled to be presented to the CAC and Technical committees in September before approval by the TPB on September 18. He said the approved RTPP, along with the forthcoming Strategic Development Plan for Regional Activity Centers, would be the focus of discussion at a COG-hosted Region Forward event on September 27. He said the nonprofit organization America Speaks would be moderating that event, which will be designed to get consensus on how to move the region's priorities forward.

Mr. Zimbabwe complimented the outline but suggested that the draft strategies "Pedestrian Amenities" and "Bicycle Amenities" should be changed to "Pedestrian Infrastructure" and "Bicycle Infrastructure." He said the word "amenity" sounds like something that we would like to have but we do not need to have. He said that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are important for helping to achieve the region's goals.

Ms. Tregoning noted that land-use actions can have an enormous impact. Even in the short-term, the things that local governments do to increase the number of destinations within walking distance are tremendously important. Improving a place's walk score is a better predictor of parking utilization than transit access or income. She said that compared to other physical investments, land-use changes are often free or relatively cheap for local governments -- a third party often provides the improvements once local governments enable it to happen. She said this point needs to be emphasized.

Mr. Kirby agreed that land-use changes are important to emphasize, noting that the RTPP's second goal stressed the importance of activity centers that would be walkable.

Ms. Hudgins responded to Ms. Tregoning's comments, noting that in some cases the reverse of her point was true: in some places, local governments can implement land-use changes to promote walkable communities, but if the transportation infrastructure is not in place, it will not work. She spoke about the importance of providing improvements for walkability and that auto-oriented improvements can sometimes be at odds with such improvements.

Mr. Weissberg said that long-term strategy A, calling for express toll lanes and rapid bus transit,

is not consistent with many local master plans and transportation plans, at least not theirs. He suggested that a combined strategy should be developed including fixed guideway transit (rather than rapid bus transit), concentrated growth, walkability, and more transit capacity.

Mr. Kirby said that long-term strategy B includes the elements that Mr. Weissberg described. He said that the strategy is derived from elements of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario, which called for shifting a lot of the current growth projections and providing more transit capacity to support more concentrated development.

Mr. Wojahn said that it is not clear in the plan how the idea of regional coordination fits in. He asked, for example, whether alleviating bottlenecks in one area might create bottlenecks in another. He said he thought that a regional transportation planning board should play a role in looking at such issues on a regional, holistic basis.

Mr. Kirby said it is true that in some cases relieving a bottleneck in one location may simply relocate the problem to another point. But in other cases, bottlenecks are artificially choking the capacity of the system. He said the RTPP's strategies are not designed to be location-specific. Specific applications, like relieving bottlenecks, would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Chair York said that from his experience it is true that relieving one bottleneck can just transfer the problem. He said that is why it is important to address these issues on a corridor basis across jurisdictions. He said this coordinated approach is a hallmark of the important work of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Mr. Elrich expressed concern about the long-term strategies calling for toll roads and BRT on expressways. For example, he said there are no jobs on I-270, and if you try to get people off I-270 and into Bethesda or Silver Spring there are bottlenecks everywhere. He said that jurisdictions like his need internal transit on top of their base roads. He said it was more important to put transit on the streets than to put BRT on toll lanes because the goal of such projects should be to get people to their jobs. He said the strategy of increasing bus frequency was also difficult to achieve because buses cannot be more frequent when traffic is moving at four or five miles an hour. Finally, he noted that although he appreciates urban environments, he believes that smart growth discussions need to transcend urban settings and take into account the differences between urban areas and suburban areas. He noted that suburban areas do not have street grids and therefore it is difficult to disperse traffic in the suburbs because there are not multiple approaches to places. He said that if the prescription is to simplistically increase density and therefore achieve walkability, it is not going to work.

Ms. Koster expressed some concerns about the RTPP schedule. She noted that the public comment period would occur during the month of August, which is typically very slow. She further noted that before being asked to approve the RTPP, the Board would only have roughly a week to absorb public comments and comments from the Citizens Advisory Committee, which provided the genesis of the RTPP. She said she would place a lot of value on the CAC's review. She asked whether there was a specific reason that the RTPP would have to receive final

approval in September. She noted that it might be intriguing to see what might come out of the Region Forward event on September 27. If the RTPP were presented at that event as a draft document, it might be possible for the TPB to incorporate comments from that session into the final document in a meaningful sense.

Mr. Kirby said that the final schedule should depend on how people respond to the draft document. He said the final document will not contain a lot of surprises, but it would include important issues for discussion. He said the Board will have the opportunity on September 18 to determine how to proceed.

Mr. Zimmerman asked for clarification that the Board would be asked to approve the final document in September.

Mr. Kirby said that is the current intention.

Given the tight schedule, Mr. Zimmerman said it was very important to get the document distributed extensively so that the TPB can receive lots of comments.

Mr. Turner noted that Mr. Kirby had asked him to chair the July 17 work session and he encouraged TPB members to attend. He said that one outcome of that session should be a recommendation about the schedule for approval. He noted that in developing the scope the RTPP, TPB members and stakeholders had different intentions about its direction and purpose. He said that he understood that as the RTPP was scoped, it was supposed to establish a process for the Board to use in making determinations about regional priorities, but it would not actually provide specific priorities.

12. Briefing on the Implementation of a TPB Regional Priority Bus Project under the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program

Referring to the mailout material and recognizing that there was little time for his presentation, Mr. Randall briefed the Board. He said that the TPB received a federal TIGER grant of \$58 million in 2010, which is 100 percent capital funding for local transit improvements. He provided a status report on each of the projects.

Mr. Randall described some challenges regarding implementation, including coordination with the Department of Defense on the Pentagon Transit Center as well as technology challenges regarding implementation of transit signal priority (TSP) treatments. He said the grant needs to be spent by September 30, 2016. The Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is leaning on federal agencies to get the money spent.

13. Notice of Proposed Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 TIP that are Exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Include Project and Funding Updates for Eleven Projects as Requested by the Maryland Department of Transportation

Referring to the handout material, Ms. Erickson said that MDOT would be seeking TIP amendments to reflect Maryland's recently approved Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), which is the six-year budget that was approved by the state legislature in April. She said the amendments will also reflect the state's recent revenue increase legislation. She said the amendments are currently out for public comment. MDOT will seek the TPB's approval at the July meeting.

14. Notice of Proposed Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 TIP that are Exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement and Include Project and Funding Updates for the Northern Virginia section of the TIP.

Ms. Hamilton said that VDOT would also seek amendments to the TIP to reflect the changes in Virginia's update to its six-year plan.

15. Other Business

Mr. Kirby called attention to the announcement that Senator Mark Warner has been named to serve as the new chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Transportation.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm.