

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee September 9, 2010 Maureen Budetti, CAC Chair

On September 9, the CAC was briefed on ongoing TPB efforts to look at road pricing alternatives for the Washington Region, including the results of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario and the awarding of a federal grant to TPB to study the public acceptability of region-wide pricing options. The Committee also discussed options for providing input to the Joint WMATA Governance Review Task Force and for disseminating the results of the review to the public. In addition, the CAC discussed the formation of the TPB task force to determine the scope and process for developing a regional transportation priorities plan.

Briefing on Results of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario, and the Initiation of a Federally-Funded Study of Region-Wide Road Pricing Alternatives

Monica Bansal of TPB staff reported on the draft final report on the CLRP Aspirations Scenario, including a description of the scenario's origins and development. She explained that the scenario builds upon past COG and TPB efforts including designation of the regional Activity Centers and the scenarios included in the original Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS). The scenario was structured so as to concentrate and balance development in activity centers and to serve those centers with enhanced highway and transit networks. The scenario revealed declines in congestion and increases in alternative modes, but increased emissions in relation to the 2030 baseline forecast. Bansal explained that while per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) drops under the scenario, overall VMT increases because of longer trip lengths and higher regional population and employment in the scenario.

CAC members asked if the development of the Aspirations Scenario reflected a failure of the RMAS studies to provide meaningful results. Ms. Bansal replied that while the individual RMAS scenarios did not produce significant shifts in transportation indicators, they did produce positive directional shifts and therefore confirmed the benefits of strategies that could then potentially be combined to achieve greater results. Committee members also sought to clarify that the results presented were in relation to the anticipated 2030 baseline, *not* in relation to current conditions.

Some committee members expressed disappointment that the priced road network concept included in the Aspirations Scenario contained extensive new lane capacity rather than looking at an approach of converting more existing road capacity into priced lanes.

This criticism led to discussion of the next steps for the TPB following completion of the Aspirations Scenario. Ron Kirby and John Swanson spoke about a recent grant award from FHWA for the TPB to look at the public acceptability of road pricing options, including alternatives that limit the construction of new lanes and focus on converting existing capacity into priced lanes.

Mr. Kirby said that looking at the political feasibility of pricing existing capacity is a logical next step following the CLRP Aspirations Scenario. He noted that the Aspirations Scenario's focus on new capacity was largely based upon existing political considerations. He also noted that network studied in the Aspirations Scenario included an inherent cross-subsidy between jurisdictions, as the new capacity added in outer jurisdictions did not pay for itself through revenue from pricing, while the converted capacity in inner jurisdictions leads to revenue surpluses. So although the overall regional network was found to be virtually revenue-neutral, that would not be the case within each jurisdiction. He also noted that the Aspirations Scenario raises the issue of whether land-use shifts along with a network of BRT on priced lanes that acts as a feeder system to rail transit places an unrealistic burden on the existing rail transit system, which is already strained.

The CAC went on to discuss the possibility of sensitivity analysis. Members noted that it can't really be determined from the results of the Aspirations Scenario analysis which strategies, facilities, or land-use shifts in particular locations result in positive gains. As one member put it, just because $A+B+C+D=X$, with X being a significant benefit, it doesn't mean that C isn't zero or even negative. There was also discussion about whether changing demographics might obviate the need for steps to reduce VMT, since an aging population could be expected to drive less. Mr. Kirby noted, however, that it is uncertain if the region's retirees will "age-in-place" or will migrate to regions with lower living costs or more amenities.

Discussion about CAC Involvement in Commenting On/Disseminating the Work of the Joint WMATA Governance Review Task Force

Chair Budetti read a report from a CAC member who attended a meeting of a subcommittee of the Metro Riders Advisory Council (RAC) regarding the Joint COG and Greater Washington Board of Trade (GWBOT) Metro Governance Review Task Force. The Committee then considered its options for collaboration with the RAC or other involvement with the Task Force, including the idea of co-hosting with the RAC a public meeting in November where the Task Force's report would be presented.

CAC members supported continued Committee attention to the Task Force effort, saying that Metro governance is an important issue to the CAC and that the CAC playing a role in disseminating the work of the Task Force to the larger public and facilitating a greater conversation would be consistent with the CAC's mission.

Members were curious about the role that the TPB had played so far in the work of the Task Force. Mr. Kirby explained that the GWBOT initiated the task force idea and sought COG's assistance. The TPB has had little involvement, though TPB staff has shared with the Task Force research on other models for transit agency governance.

The Committee considered its next steps, with some members wishing to make sure that the CAC has an opportunity to provide input to the Task Force before it finalizes its report, not just play a role in promoting public discussion of the report. Due to remaining uncertainty about the timing of the release of the Task Force report in draft or final form, the CAC decided to revisit the issue at its October meeting, but asked Mr. Swanson to contact the RAC about the potential for co-hosting a public meeting in November, presumably following the release of the draft report of the Task Force.

Discussion Regarding Formation of the TPB Regional Transportation Prioritization Task Force and CAC Participation

Mr. Swanson reviewed for the Committee the activities approved by the TPB as a follow-up to the May 26 Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities. He said that the TPB had voted at its July 21 meeting to form the Task Force, and go ahead with three other activities to be completed by staff this fall: an inventory of unfunded transportation projects contained in various plans in the region, research into ways in which other MPOs prioritize unfunded transportation projects or strategies, and options for improving public information and education about the current transportation planning process in the region.

Chair Budetti appointed Emmet Tydings, Larry Martin, and herself to serve as the CAC's representatives on the new TPB Task Force, but other interested members were encouraged to attend meetings, follow the work of the Task Force, and provide their input. Members who had been involved with the TPB Scenario Study Task Force emphasized that the CAC can play a role in putting forward ideas rather than reacting to ideas.

The Committee decided to form a subcommittee of members interested in the work of the Task Force to discuss ideas that could be put forward and keep up-to-date on the Task Force's work.

One idea that had the support of multiple Committee members was to encourage more comprehensive benefit-cost analysis in relation to regional goals as part of efforts to produce regional plans. In this way, project submissions for the CLRP and TIP could be evaluated in relation to TPB goals. Mr. Swanson noted that this was the subject of much discussion at the May 26 Conversation, with many participants suggesting ways in which prioritization of projects could flow from regional goals.

Other CAC Business

- Mr. Swanson informed the CAC of the upcoming edition of the TPB Community Leadership Institute (CLI) to be held on November 4th and 6th. He invited interested CAC members to attend and noted that many current members are alumni of the program, and encouraged members to share with staff the names of others who might want to attend.
- Mr. Kirby provided an overview of items on the September 15 TPB Agenda. There was some discussion regarding Item 10 – Report on an Overview of Local and Regional Transit Systems Serving the Washington Metropolitan Area, with members and staff noting a growing trend of local jurisdictions doing more of their own bus service rather than relying on WMATA, and various reasons why that might be the case.

ATTENDANCE **CAC Meeting, September 9, 2010**

Members in Attendance

1. Maureen Budetti, VA, Chair
2. Zach Dobelbower, DC
3. William Easter, MD
4. Harold Foster, DC
5. Kelby Funn, MD
6. Larry Martin, DC
7. Stephen McCoy, DC
8. Allen Muchnick, VA
9. Gail Parker, VA
10. Tina Slater, MD
11. Emmet Tydings, MD
12. Faith Wheeler, DC

Alternates in Attendance

1. Frederick Walker, VA

Members Not in Attendance

1. Farrell Keough, MD
2. Jim Larsen, VA
3. Madeline McDuffy, VA

Staff/Others

Ron Kirby, COG/TPB
John Swanson, COG/TPB
Darren Smith, COG/TPB
Monica Bansal, COG/TPB