
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Highlights of the meeting of the Aviation Technical Subcommittee

*Thursday, January 26, 2012, 10:30 AM to 12:00 noon
Frederick Municipal Airport*

Meeting Attendees

- Keith Meurlin (WATF)
- Mike Hines (MWAA) – via teleconference
- Tim Davis (City of Frederick)
- Rick Johnson (City of Frederick)
- Jolene Berry (City of Manassas)
- Amber Carran-Fletcher (DDOT)
- Tony Storck (MAA) – via teleconference
- Kevin Daugherty (City of Frederick)
- Juan Rivera (City of Manassas)

COG/TPB staff in attendance

- Bob Griffiths
- Clara Reschovsky
- Abdul Mohammed
- Rich Roisman

Chair Amber Carran-Fletcher called the meeting to order at 10:30am.

1. Approval of highlights from the previous meeting (November 17, 2011)

Mr. Davis noted that the minutes indicated that the next (January) meeting would occur at COG rather than the Frederick Airport. Mr. Roisman indicated he would correct that problem. The September 21, 2011 meeting highlights were approved with corrections. The approved meeting summary will be available on the MWCOG website.

2. 2011 Washington-Baltimore Regional Air Passenger Survey Update

Abdul Mohammed from COG/TPB staff provided a status update on the air passenger survey. In-house editing has been completed on all returned questionnaires, about 21,000 forms. Key punching data entry is in process; the work is being done by a Falls Church firm called S.A.I.D., Inc. They are the only firm left in the region that performs manual key punching; all other firms (and surveys) use digital capture (optical character recognition scans of hard copy, or tablet / handheld or web-based questionnaires). The first data files are expected by the end of next week.

Mr. Roisman reminded the subcommittee that the survey process is delayed from the anticipated schedule. Normally, preliminary survey results would be reported at the January meeting; however, due to the delays in administering the survey (which originated during summer 2011 when there were difficulties securing funding from MWAA), the entire schedule has slipped approximately 4-6 weeks. It is hoped that staff will be able to catch up somewhat during the actual survey analysis. The subcommittee should expect a preliminary survey report at the next (March) meeting. Mr. Roisman also re-emphasized the need to move to a scanable survey instrument for the 2013 survey. Staff will be discussing strategies for this change internally and reporting back to the subcommittee at the March meeting.

Mr. Griffiths asked if staff had received all (gate) passenger boarding counts for the surveyed flights. Mr. Mohammed responded that he had. Mr. Roisman asked if mailback surveys were still being received. Mr. Mohammed responded that they were. Mr. Griffiths asked if the change (from the 2009 survey) in the survey stratification would make the analysis more difficult. Mr. Mohammed responded that regardless, the results would be more representative due to the improved stratification. In the 2009 survey there were 24 strata, but for the 2011 survey there are nearly 300 strata. Mr. Roisman noted that there would be implications for survey weighting. Following the preliminary report the subcommittee will be asked for comments; a final report is expected for either the May or July meeting.

Mr. Davis asked if the survey results would be presented to the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). Mr. Griffiths responded that they would, probably for the June or July meeting, depending on the timing of the final report and the Board agenda.

3. Update on 2011 Enplanement Data

Abdul Mohammed of COG/TPB staff presented an update on 2011 enplanement data. Each year the subcommittee receives reports on observed enplanements at the three regional commercial airports. These data are received by staff from the airports on a monthly basis. For today's report, data for the MWAA airports are only available through October 2011, so November and December have been estimated. For BWI, the data were available through November 2011, so only December has been estimated for today's report. Staff will report back to the subcommittee at the March meeting with the full year's worth of data.

Mr. Storck indicated that he had located the November and December for the MWAA airports on the Authority website. Mr. Mohammed said he had checked recently and not found the data but would re-check. Mr. Storck also indicated that while the BWI figures were final, they would probably not be officially released until mid-February when calendar year summaries are issued, but he could provide the number to us earlier if needed.

Mr. Mohammed continued with his report. Enplanement growth at all three airports combined between 2010 and 2011 was very low (less than one percent). Staff speculates that the difficult global economy is impacting regional air travel. Based on the 2009 Air Passenger Survey, nearly

60% of regional departures are non-work related, i.e., discretionary travel that is more likely to be depressed during poor economic times.

Mr. Roisman asked if the pattern in the summer / fall months shown in the three years of data (decrease in August, increase in October) was consistent with earlier years. Mr. Mohammed noted that it was, generally. Mr. Storck noted that historically, August was busier, but as schools have started earlier, discretionary travel during the month has decreased, and airlines have reduced capacity. By the end of September, business travel increases and people travel for the Columbus Day holiday during October, leading to the increased enplanements.

4. Draft CASP Briefing for TPB Technical Committee and TPB

Mr. Roisman reviewed a draft PowerPoint presentation on the CASP program and activities. Periodically, staff briefs the TPB Technical Committee (the parent of the Aviation Technical Subcommittee) and/or the TPB on the CASP program. This is done both to introduce new committee and Board members to the air systems planning program and re-familiarize existing members. The committees will be briefed during their March meeting cycle; however, since the March meeting of the Aviation Technical Subcommittee occurs afterward, the group is being asked to review this early draft presentation now. The last briefing occurred during 2009. Mr. Roisman asked the subcommittee for their thoughts on major issues from the CASP work to highlight in front of the Technical Committee and TPB. He noted that 1) air traffic is increasing, and with it demand for ground access to the airports, so surface transportation planning must take airport access into account and 2) ground access is becoming more difficult, as evidenced by the ground access travel time reports and 3) the regional economic impact of the airports.

Mr. Davis indicated that the travel time data will be of great interest to the technical committee and suggested including maps and graphics from that report. Mr. Griffiths noted that the TPB is moving toward performance measurement toward achievement of regional goals, and one of the goals of the TPB Vision is maintaining convenient access to the region's airports. The TPB is also beginning work on a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP), which looks at major projects that cannot be currently funded but would be a key regional priority should more transportation funding become available in the future. Projects that meet those criteria for airport access should be highlighted.

Mr. Griffiths also noted that the presentation should highlight the economic impacts of the regional airports. Mr. Roisman indicated that the presentation could draw on recent reports on that topic completed for both Virginia and Maryland. He also noted that he has provided data to support proposed aviation performance measures for the RTPP at the request of TPB senior management. Mr. Roisman also noted that performance measurement is increasing in importance at the Federal level for the surface transportation reauthorization bill, and likely for FAA reauthorization as well. Mr. Davis noted that any such requirements are expected to appear in state and local planning processes as well.

Mr. Griffiths noted that discussion of the airport forecasts will need to consider previous comments from the airports that the 2040 forecasts exceed the airport capacity. Mr. Roisman will discuss specific wording of that point with subcommittee representatives.

Mr. Roisman noted that since there will be a separate briefing held later in the year on the results of the 2011 Air Passenger Survey, the presentation will make reference to that briefing, but Slide 12 will be dropped. Mr. Meurlin asked that WATF be added to the list of agencies at the bottom of Slide 3 and Mr. Roisman agreed. Mr. Roisman will circulate another draft to the subcommittee prior to the March Technical Committee and TPB meetings.

5. Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Meurlin discussed WATF efforts to inform transportation officials of the ground access problems at Dulles, particularly from the west and south. The I-66 / VA 28 interchange was recently noted as the third worst bottleneck for trucks in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Rivera invited the subcommittee to hold a future meeting at the Manassas Airport. The airport is finalizing a strategic plan. One of the issues identified in the plan is how the congestion on I-66 hurts the airport's role as a reliever for National and Dulles, since corporate and general aviation (GA) users of the facility still have to contend with long travel times to access the airport or reach their final destination. Airport staff advise users to plan their travel so that they are using I-66 during off-peak periods. The airport will also be starting a runway extension this year (500 feet, to 6,200 feet). Two other projects are in the design stage: a relocation of their localizer, and a taxiway (K) realignment. A marketing plan will be beginning shortly, as well as a west-side development study. Operations have been down overall, but other indicators are up. In addition, as enplanements increase at National and Dulles, "spillover" traffic at Manassas (and Leesburg and Frederick [and Stafford] and other small regional airports) is expected to rise as smaller corporate and GA aircraft have increased difficulty using the larger commercial airports.

Mr. Rivera expressed interest in checking the start location of the Woodbridge ground access travel time route for future runs or adding a route to measure access to Manassas. Mr. Roisman indicated that they would look into for the next study, but expected to confirm what was already heard anecdotally from Manassas users about poor conditions along I-66. Mr. Roisman also asked if there were difficulties getting to I-66 from the Manassas Airport. Mr. Rivera responded that recent improvements to VA 234 had reduced travel times in that area, and although there had been improvements to I-66 itself, travel was still slow. Mr. Davis noted that VDOT's I-66 Advanced Traffic Management (ATM) work starting in the fall would yield additional solutions.

Mr. Rivera also noted that there was also an education component for his clients – many people coming in from outside the area are not familiar with high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and other part of the regional surface transportation system, such as VRE. While increased VRE use is not likely given the characteristics of corporate users of the airport,

increased HOV use is a possibility. Mr. Roisman also noted the added westbound lane on I-66 inside the Beltway, and two VDOT studies of I-66 that are ongoing.

Mr. Griffiths noted that we would need to review all route starting points for the next ground access travel time study, as he had found seemingly illogical results just because the starting points of two adjacent activity centers varied greatly in their distances from the regional freeway network. The center of commercial activity would be a better starting point for all routes.

Mr. Daugherty reported that Frederick Airport would soon be installing Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) technology. Frederick will be the second location in Maryland (after BWI) to have ADS-B, which is a key component of the NextGen navigation system. The antenna will greatly improve Frederick's radar coverage. FAA is funding 100% of the project, which will cost approximately \$1 Million. The improvement will also allow Frederick to have radar coverage all the way to the ground, instead of having to rely on the Potomac TRACON. The project will be completed in one year.

Mr. Roisman reported on a workshop on regional air systems planning that he attended at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting in Washington. There were presentations from the FAA Office of Planning, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Amtrak, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC, TPB's sister agency in Philadelphia). DVRPC's air system's planning deals exclusively with GA airports and not the commercial airports. He missed a workshop on FAA's updates to their Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) procedures, but will try to get the materials for review, since our enplanement forecasts rely on the TAF figures.

Ms. Reschovsky noted that many of the sessions she attended at TRB on travel survey research contained information that can be applied to the 2013 Air Passenger Survey, since major changes are needed in the survey procedures and methodology due to the limitations of the paper questionnaire.

Chair Carran-Fletcher adjourned the meeting at 11:40am.

The next Aviation Technical Subcommittee meeting will be Thursday, March 22, 2011 at 10:30 AM at MWCOG.