

REGIONAL Transportation Priorities Plan Must Focus on REGIONAL Priorities
Statement of Robert O. Chase
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
October 16, 2013

As the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, you are being asked to consider and adopt a Transportation Priorities Plan that is regional, meaning one that addresses the region's overall, over-arching transportation network.

Regional in scope means a plan composed of those projects and strategies that have greatest mobility value to the overall regional network; not a plan that encompasses every transportation project important to every locality.

Many transportation investments and strategies that may be important to individual jurisdictions do not rise to the level of contributing significantly to the overall operation of the regional network. Local transportation is what you do in your day jobs.

Here the job and responsibility are to focus on performance-based, truly regional needs, which may be quite different from individual jurisdictional or personal agendas.

What's particularly challenging about the RTPP process and TPB in general is that no one in this room is elected or appointed or accountable or responsible or measured by the regional transportation network's operation or efficiency.

That ours is a regional economy is reflected in the fact that travel between jurisdictions and states is greater than perhaps any other region. Employers are dependent upon a workforce drawn from a wide work shed. Most Arlingtonians work outside of Arlington. Most Arlington workers live elsewhere. Housing affordability and future demand for highly skilled workers make it increasingly unlikely that most people will live near where they work.

A regional highway network with managed toll and bus lanes reflects and addresses this reality. It is exactly what our region needs. The fact that it hasn't been discussed as widely in this room as other concepts reflects that fact that so much of the TPB's focus is on locally-oriented as opposed to regionally oriented concepts and strategies.

For the RTPP to be a meaningful document and for residents of this region to have the interconnected regional network they need, you must hang your local hats outside this room and focus on what's most important for the region, as opposed to what's most important to your individual jurisdiction from either a transportation or economic competition perspective.

That's a tough ask, but a necessary one if our region is to have the quality of life and prosperity it's residents need and the future our children deserve.



Resolution of Support
By the Washington Area Regional Advisory Board of AAA Mid-Atlantic
For the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

September 12, 2013

Having been briefed on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan by the region's Transportation Planning Director, Ronald Kirby, we, the members of the Washington Area Regional Advisory Board of AAA Mid-Atlantic, concur with the overall thrust of the RTPP.

Given that our region has some of the worst congestion in the nation, we find this report refreshing and far more realistic in its proposals to enhance roads and mass transit, largely through the development of express toll lanes that can also provide an extensive bus rapid transit network. Such a network can be developed at a fraction of the cost of a comparable rail expansion, while providing high quality, reliable, rapid transit service and improved highways.

Therefore, we the AAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Board for the Washington Metropolitan Area, on behalf of the nearly 900,000 Washington area AAA Mid-Atlantic members, do endorse this plan and urge the Transportation Planning Board to adopt it and work towards its full implementation.

Gerald W. Pettit, Board Chairman

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The Committee of 100 on the Federal City



www.committeeof100.net

October 15, 2013

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Scott York, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
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Dear Chairman York:

Agenda Item 8 for the October 16 Transportation Planning Board meeting consists of a Report from the Transportation Planning Department of MWCOG about the comments submitted concerning the draft [Regional Transportation Priorities Plan \(RTPP\)](#).

The Committee of 100 was surprised to see that the Report didn't even mention MARC or VRE, and that the fairly extensive discussion that was prompted by the omission of any serious discussion of commuter rail in the previous draft seems to have been ignored. We submitted comments about this Plan on August 16, pointing out the importance of expanding passenger and commuter rail to relieve vehicular congestion, the constraints on commuter and passenger rail and the need to separate freight from commuter and passenger rail to remove those constraints. The Committee of 100 was not the only party whose RTPP comments addressed commuter rail:

- VRE criticized the draft for not including commuter rail and includes several of the points that have been advanced by the Committee of 100.
- Washington Airports Task Force provided statistics about the percentage of population that live within a half mile and one mile of a VRE stations, and recommended "all weather people mover systems" to expand access to the VRE stations.
- The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission recommended that the plan incorporate local bus, commuter bus, and commuter rail operations and their significance to the overall transportation system should be explained.
- The Action Committee for Transit (a Montgomery Co. organization) objected to the emphasis on highway expansion and advocated in favor of bus rapid transit, VRE, and MARC
- The Montgomery Co. Sierra Club discussed bus rapid transit, streetcars and the Purple Line. Their comments pointed out that the importance of commuter rail (and bus rapid transit) was neglected in the Plan.
- The Fairfax and Mt. Vernon chapters of the Virginia Sierra Club talked about encouraging development near Metro stations, objected to the emphasis on express

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toll lanes for automobiles, and pointed out the need to take into account transportation emissions in terms of climate change.

- The Fairfax Co. Transportation Advisory Commission favored transit expansion over highway expansion and pointed out that the investment is not a cost, it is an Asset on the Balance Sheet and will earn a return by saving bus cost and fuel and boosting property values.

The Report that will be presented to the Transportation Planning Board on October 16 (Agenda Item 8) contains no mention of the Committee of 100 comments or the other comments that addressed commuter rail, nor does it address commuter and passenger rail.

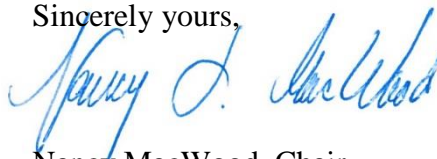
In addition to the August 16 comments, the Committee of 100 has also provided oral and written comments to the Transportation Planning Board on two occasions about the importance of commuter rail (May 15 – Monte Edwards' comments, September 18 - George Clark's comments). Can you tell us why commuter rail, which appeared to be of significant interest when the Committee of 100 appeared before the Transportation Planning Board, and was mentioned so frequently in the RTPP comments filed by others, is not even mentioned in the Transportation Planning Department's staff report?

The Committee of 100 believes that commuters need to be provided with a practicable alternative to automobiles, and that allowing buses to use the shoulder lanes or more cars to use toll lanes will merely increase vehicular congestion. Commuter rail provides a workable alternative for commuters, with the basic infrastructure already in place. If commuter rail is to play an important and expanded role, the Transportation Planning Board is in the best position to make that happen. Both the need for inter-jurisdictional cooperation and the importance of looking at our transportation system as a whole suggest that MWCOG needs to play a leadership role on commuter rail issues.

Unfortunately, convening at noon on October 16, your meeting conflicts directly with the Committee of 100 membership meeting, so I'm submitting this letter with the request that it be read during the public comment period, as if a representative of the Committee of 100 were there in person.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Nancy MacWood, Chair

Cc: Ronald Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning
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