

## REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee  
November 16, 2011

The CAC meeting on November 10 was largely dedicated to a briefing and discussion on the TPB's Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. Because CAC chair Zach Dobelbower was ill, the meeting was chaired by Rob Mandle and Maureen Budetti.

### **Briefing on the Development of Performance Measures for the TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)**

Ron Kirby, director of transportation planning at COG, briefed the committee on how the staff proposes to use performance measures as a key tool in developing the priorities plan. He said performance measures would be used to identify potential near- and long-term strategies to address regional challenges.

Mr. Kirby emphasized that there is increasing interest at the federal level in integrating performance measures into the planning and programming process. He said the TPB will be part of a federal pilot project through the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) to test the use of performance measures. He also noted that there is a growing body of literature on the subject. He called attention to a report from an "international scan" that highlighted three conclusions regarding the effective use of performance measures: 1) limit the number of performance measures; 2) conduct frequent dialogue with stakeholders to ensure the measures are appropriate; 3) remember that the reason to use performance measures is to improve decision making, not to enforce arbitrary targets.

Regarding public involvement, Mr. Kirby proposed that performance measures should be the subject of the first public outreach activities related to the priorities plan. He suggested using web-based surveys and structured focus groups for this purpose.

CAC member comments included the following:

- ***Concern about the limited attention being paid to goals-setting in the priorities planning process.***

Mr. Kirby said that the priorities planning process does not need to extensively revisit the region's goals. He explained that Step 1 in the priorities plan scope called for the TPB to "reaffirm goals" that have already been established through the *TPB Vision* and *Region Forward*. Mr. Kirby's November memo to TPB on the priorities plan includes a draft set of goals, derived from the *Vision* and *Region Forward*, which would serve as a starting point in developing performance measures. He said the development of both the *Vision* and *Region Forward* included extensive public involvement activities.

CAC members expressed concern that the priorities planning process *appeared to be bypassing goal-setting*, which they said should be a key step. Member comments included the following:

- ***Missed opportunity for buy-in.*** The priorities plan should seek to develop stakeholder and public consensus about the future. If there is no open discussion regarding the region's goals, the process is missing a key opportunity to engage and empower community leaders and citizens.
  - ***Validation for the entire priorities planning process.*** Members suggested that a robust discussion about goals at the beginning of the process will create a solid foundation for the new plan. On the other hand, if the discussion about goals is short-changed, the potential influence of the plan might be diminished or the final product may be less legitimate.
  - ***People want to talk about goals.*** CAC members suggested that even if a public involvement activity tries to focus discussion on performance measures, citizens will want to talk about goals because that is what interests them.
  - ***Uncertainty about what is/is not included in the draft list of goals.*** The draft set of regional goals that were included in Mr. Kirby's memo seem to have been assembled by staff from the much larger sets of goals articulated in the *TPB Vision and Region Forward*. While CAC members did not specifically object to the contents of the list, they did argue that the TPB, stakeholders and the public should be more directly involved in developing this list of goals.
  - ***How will the regional goals be "reaffirmed"?*** Noting that Step 1 in the priorities plan scope calls for the TPB to "reaffirm regional goals," CAC members asked what this phrase actually means. More specifically, will the TPB be asked to vote on the goals that underlie the priorities plan? Some members suggested that such a TPB vote should take place.
- CAC members also had *comments regarding the role of performance measures* in the priorities planning process:
    - ***Be careful that metrics do not drive priorities.*** Members expressed concern that some important goals/challenges may be difficult to measure and therefore might not be included.
    - ***Are performance measures a good topic for the beginning of public involvement?*** Members suggested that performance measures seemed more appropriate as a topic for discussion among professionals because the public will care more about outcomes than measures.

- ***Do not over-emphasize performance measures.*** Members suggested that even though the federal government seems to be focused on performance measurement right now, this could be a “flavor of the month.” The TPB should be sure the priorities plan is grounded in our region’s needs, and is not based upon an approach that is imposed from the outside.
- Finally, the CAC had some ***overall comments*** regarding the development of the priorities plan.
  - ***Ensure linkages to the TPB’s scenario analysis.*** Since 2006, the CAC has been calling upon the TPB to develop a priorities plan. The CAC’s original intention was to see a priorities plan that, in large part, would be derived from the TPB’s scenario analysis, which called attention to the challenges of growth and potential solutions. CAC members expressed concern that the linkage to scenario planning was not clear in staff’s approach to the priorities plan development.
  - ***Public outreach must educate the public about the status quo and options for change.*** Members noted that outreach for the priorities plan must include a strong educational component. These efforts must encourage and help people to understand why these issues are important.
  - ***What will be the final product of the priorities plan?*** CAC members emphasized the importance of defining the final product of this process. Mr. Kirby responded that his ideal outcome would be a well-disciplined analysis that will make sure the TPB is prepared for the next federal transportation authorization. He said that when that law is passed, he would like the region to be able to say that we have a plan that was developed using an approach that the federal government has promoted, and therefore, these priorities are ready to be funded.
  - Some ***specific thoughts*** about public involvement:
    - Ensure it is as interactive and diverse as possible.
    - For web-based surveys, invite groups to get their members to respond.
    - Do not have closed meetings.
    - Use Facebook and social media.

## **Other Business**

- Zach Dobelbower is resigning the chairmanship of the CAC and moving to Denver. At the TPB’s November 16 meeting, TPB Chair Muriel Bowser will announce a replacement for Mr. Dobelbower to serve out the remainder of his term, which concludes in January.
- Pursuant to the TPB Participation Process, the CAC agreed to conduct an election by email to select six individuals (two each from D.C., Maryland and Virginia) to serve on next year’s CAC. The results of that election will be announced at the December CAC meeting. The new TPB officers for 2012, following their election in December, will each

identify three individuals to serve on the 2012 CAC. The TPB will approve the entire slate of new CAC members at its meeting in January. The first meeting of the new CAC will occur in February.

- Mr. Kirby briefed the committee on the November TPB agenda.

**ATTENDANCE**  
**CAC Meeting, November 10, 2011**

Members Present

1. Maureen Budetti (VA)
2. Harold Foster (DC)
3. Kelby Funn (MD)
4. Larry Martin (DC)
5. Allen Muchnick (VA)
6. Tina Slater (MD)
7. Emmet Tydings (MD)
8. Fred Walker (VA)
9. Faith Wheeler (DC)

Members Not Present

1. Zach Dobelbower (DC), Chair
2. Bill Easter (MD)
3. Howard Levine (MD)
4. Stephen McCoy (DC)
5. Madeline McDuffy (VA)
6. Brian Winterhalter (VA)

Alternates Present

- Kimberley Kaplan (VA)
- Rob Mandle (DC)
- Stephen Still (VA)
- Kevin Posey (DC)

Staff and Guests

- Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
- John Swanson, COG/TPB staff
- Ben Hampton, COG/TPB staff
- Gareth James, COG/TPB staff
- Bill Orleans, citizen