

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Item #2

MEMORANDUM

July 1, 2010

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Karin Foster
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Comments Received and Staff Responses on the draft *National Capital Region Freight Plan 2010*

The draft *National Capital Region Freight 2010* (draft, dated May 26, 2010) was presented to the Technical Committee at the June 4 meeting and a few comments were made. The draft *National Capital Region Freight 2010* was also presented at the Freight Subcommittee meeting on May 6 and put out for public comment until May 25.

This memorandum summarizes the comments received and staff responses or actions taken. Staff has received a total of nine comments. (Comments refer to page numbers in the May 26 document. Replies refer to page numbers in the updated July 1, 2010 document). Staff acknowledges the comments made.

Comments and Responses

1. Review the Freight Project Database to ensure the distinction is made between projects in the Maryland Freight Plan, Maryland Rail Plan, and projects in the Freight Project Database. (John Thomas, Frederick County)

The source documents were double-checked to be sure they matched up with the Freight Project Database. The Freight Project Database and its key has been updated, and additional Maryland Freight Plan Projects have been added that were not included earlier. Each project originates from a source document listed under the "Source" column in the database. Some projects are listed in multiple source documents.

2. Identify specific freight companies in the region. Address land-use/zoning issues regarding the decline in available freight/industrial land. (Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County)

The National Capital Region Freight Plan 2010 includes a map of National Capital Region Freight Generators and Freight Clusters on page 62. Language is included with references to specific trucking/warehousing facilities in each area on pages 60-61. A paragraph was added about the issue of declining freight industrial land.

3. Page 27 of the Freight Plan gives a lot of data on tonnage and value of commodities in the Washington region. Add national data for comparison.

Staff updated the document and added national data for comparison on page 28.

4. In the report, address the Port of Baltimore. (Reena Mathews, MSHA)

The Port of Baltimore and the Port of Virginia at Hampton Roads were mentioned in the report “Maritime Movement” section on pages 46-47 briefly. Additional information and a table have been added to reflect the importance of the contribution these two ports make nationally. The summary table is included below:

	Top 25 US Rank	
	Containers	Tonnage
Port of Virginia-Hampton Roads	5	18
Port of Baltimore	13	17

(Source: FHWA, Freight Analysis Framework 2009 and Freight Facts and Figures 2009)

5. In the presentation, clarify that the maritime slide reference to barge shipments does not include ports. (Reena Mathews, MSHA)

The maritime slide was updated to clarify its focus on barge movement and an additional reference was made to cite the two major ports in our region.

6. For TPB, organize presentation in context of “Freight Issues” for clarity. (Kanti Srikanth, VDOT)

The National Capital Region Freight 2010 slide presentation was reorganized to provide additional context of the National Capital Region Freight 2010 and to put a focus on freight issues in our region.

Three comments below were received from freight stakeholders. Additional comments were received from the Freight Subcommittee, recommending documents to review, organization, or edits and these were addressed.

7. A number of comments were received from Leo Schefer, Washington Airports Task Force:

- a. Stress the need for commercial vehicles to be able to use the region’s major arteries, including HOT lanes;

Staff revised the discussion on page 73 on how highway infrastructure supports all modes of freight movement.

- b. Demand lines for truck trips to Washington Dulles International Airport were developed from 16 points throughout the region as part of a recent airport access study;

- c. A number of logistics companies...opened satellite distribution centers on the other side of the Potomac River, due to the restrictions created by lack of Potomac bridges;
- d. VTRANS 2035 calls for a new corridor running from points south of I-66 to points north of the Potomac River to provide improved access to Dulles with freight being an obvious component;
- e. Air freight is a combination of air and truck.

Comments c. d. and e. were incorporated into the document air cargo section under Chapter 5 Current Freight Conditions.

- f. The London Underground used to haul garbage and mail in overnight hours when no passenger services are scheduled. This region might consider that the TPB freight plan call for a study to determine if use of Metro for moving freight from our airports to distribution centers downtown would be cost effective.

Staff shared this question with Sean Kennedy of WMATA staff, who noted that Metrorail is in operations 19 hours a day, and that during non-operating hours, WMATA does track maintenance, moves vehicles to stage them for the next day, and other activities. Thus it likely infeasible to haul freight during off hours.

- 8. A number of comments were received from Richard Cogswell, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation:
 - a. The floor beams in the existing double track Long Bridge across the Potomac River date from the 1890's and need to be replaced for continued service. It may be easier to simply build new spans and float them in and out from a barge at high tide. CSX could probably give you some numbers.
 - b. Undercutting the bridges in SW DC may be more complex than it would appear, because of the vertical curves in the track and bridge abutments being relatively near the surface.
 - c. The Virginia Avenue tunnel dates in part from 1873 and needs much more than a new roof; it needs to be totally rebuilt while rail traffic continues to operate. Staging will be an interesting exercise. There is no floor under the tracks for much of the tunnel and the walls have started to move towards each other in places.

Staff adjusted the "Virginia Avenue Tunnel" project description to read "Reconstruct tunnel, raise, replace roof for double-stack clearance, construct second track."

- d. The price of the "Regional Rail ATIS" project appears to have 2 or 3 extra zeros in it.

- e. A report was done on the “Northeast Capital Subdivision” project roughly 10 years ago by either VRE or VDRPT. It would reconfigure the L’Enfant Plaza VRE station into an island platform with direct access to the subway station. Price appears high by at least a zero.

With respect to comment d. and e., the projects were drawn from the I-95 Corridor Coalition’s Mid-Atlantic Rail Operation Study (MAROPs) report and the price reflected the price of a consolidation of MAROPs projects. Since individual project costs were not given, staff left the price field blank for all MAROPs projects.

- f. Our final report to Congress on the replacement of both the B&P and Howard Street Tunnels in Baltimore is due out later this summer.
- g. We and Amtrak have told MARC a number of times that they must build a 4th main from a point near “Bridge” interlocking just south of the B&P Tunnel in Baltimore through the New Carrollton Station if they want to run more trains. The existing catenary poles are spaced for the installation of the 4th track, but a few new bridges will be required and station platforms moved.

9. A number of comments were received from Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Railway Express

- a. P. 38, 1st paragraph:
This paragraph includes statement “CSX owns several miles of tracks in the National Capital Region.” What is the boundary of the NCR? CSX owns significantly more than several miles of track within the metropolitan area. The discussion of Norfolk-Southern on p. 40 references their lines in Alexandria and Manassas as well as VRE. I suggest VRE should be mentioned in the discussion of CSX as well.

Staff updated the document to reflect that CSX owns “significant” track mileage in the National Capital Region.

The National Capital Region in this document refers to the TPB Planning Area defined on page 17-18. A sentence was added to clarify this.

VRE is mentioned on page 39 of the CSX section and page 41 of the Norfolk Southern section.

- b. P. 42, 1st paragraph
While traditionally freight railroads have maintained and expanded their infrastructure using their own funds, that has changed in VA with the establishment of the Rail Enhancement Fund (REF). VA has made a commitment to significant investments in freight infrastructure through the REF program. It may be beneficial to at least reference the program as a new approach to funding rail infrastructure, especially capacity expansion in mixed freight-passenger rail corridors.

The REF was mentioned on page 72 of the Freight Plan.

- c. P. 42, 5th paragraph

This paragraph indicates “In addition, Amtrak operates a new service between Lynchburg and Union Station.” Suggest revising to “In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia has established new intercity passenger rail service, operated by Amtrak, between Lynchburg, VA and Union Station.”

The revision has been made.

- d. P. 73, project 26, New Rail Bridge over Potomac

The description indicates “third and fourth main track on CSXT feeding into new rail bridge to eliminate train conflicts.” There are currently 3 tracks on both sides of the Long Bridge.

The statement of the third and fourth main track on CSXT refers to feeding rail into a New Rail Bridge over the Potomac adjoining the CSX Long Bridge. Additional information can be found in MAROPs.

- e. P. 74, project 29, Highway rail grade and track speed improvements

There is a typo in the description “3rd tack” FYI, a number of 3rd track segments have been constructed already or are underway between DC and Fredericksburg on CSXT.

The revision has been made.

- f. p. 84, item 3

I’m not sure if this comment could be addressed here or not, but one concern that has become more relevant as public funding in private rail infrastructure has become more common is the need for benefits realized by the infrastructure improvement in mixed freight-passenger rail corridors apply to passenger rail operations as well as the freight rail operations. This was a key element of TPB comments on the CSX National Gateway and NS Crescent Corridor projects.

This comment was addressed in a side box on page 43 and mentioned in other areas of the document.

- g. p. 85, Key Findings/Recommendations

This section does not give any mention to ongoing coordination between passenger rail and freight operations in mixed freight-passenger corridors. As freight traffic increases, I believe there will be an ongoing challenge to balance passenger and freight needs and movements within mixed use corridors. I suggest the recommendations section include some reference to the coordination of freight and rail transit projects at the TPB/TPB staff level as well as jurisdiction levels.

A Best Practice recognizes this comment, and a reference to TPB was added. A Recommendation was added to reflect the importance of coordination between the freight railroads and the TPB Freight Program, passenger railroads, and the public.

Thank you to all who reviewed and made comments.