

2005 END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Dennis Jaffe, 2005 CAC Chair

This report summarizes the activities of the Citizens Advisory Committee in 2005.

Emergency Preparedness

More than four years have passed since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Although a number of emergency preparedness improvements have been implemented since that time, the CAC believes the region has been too slow in establishing a regional system for incident response coordination and communication.

Proposals to develop mechanisms for incident response coordination have been under discussion in various forms since at least 2001. In 2004, regional leaders proposed an incident coordination center—currently called CapCom—that may be housed at the University of Maryland. Early in 2005, the CAC publicly voiced serious concern that implementation of CapCom—or of an effective, prudent alternative—had not moved forward.

In April, CAC Chairman Dennis Jaffe wrote a letter (attached) to key transportation leaders in the region regarding CapCom. The letter encouraged “a deliberative, but prompt, conclusion to the exploratory stage of this effort” and a “clear and concerted” commitment to implement a regionwide coordination program, like CapCom. The letter also called for regional leaders to convene a meeting to conclusively determine whether and how CapCom will be established.

Pursuant to the CAC’s request, regional transportation leaders met on July 20 in a work session prior to the TPB board meeting. At that meeting, officials expressed their commitment to moving forward with CapCom, although the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of the proposed CapCom structure. District representatives indicated that a DDOT-funded study by the Volpe Center of the Federal Highway Administration would examine options for institutionalizing a regional center for incident communication and coordination.

Throughout the fall, the CAC monitored the development of the CapCom project. The committee was pleased that the federal transportation reauthorization legislation, which was enacted in July, included \$2 million for CapCom, which is enough to get the center started. In October, the TPB amended the region’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to permit the federal funding to be used for CapCom.

The CAC passed a resolution (attached) on October 13, in support of the TIP amendment for CapCom funding. The resolution also called for the Volpe study to “move forward

collaboratively with respect to input from all three jurisdictions and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).” Further, the CAC resolution encouraged “state and other regional decision-makers to identify additional funding” to make CapCom sustainable.

The CAC believes there is no good excuse for further foot-dragging in implementing a regional incident coordination and communication program. In 2006, the CAC will continue to monitor the implementation of CapCom.

Metro Funding

The CAC agrees that fixing Metro’s funding shortfall must be a top regional priority.

The committee was pleased that the TPB endorsed the recommendation of a Blue Ribbon Panel on Metro funding that called for the region to implement a dedicated regional revenue source for WMATA. The Blue Ribbon panel was sponsored by the Board of Trade, the Federal City County and COG.

In January, the committee hosted a panel discussion on the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel. Throughout the year, the committee continued to monitor efforts to identify sustainable funding for Metro.

In July, Virginia Congressman Tom Davis introduced legislation to provide \$1.5 billion in federal money over 10 years for WMATA. In November, Bill Womack, legislative director for Congressman Tom Davis, spoke to the CAC about the bill. CAC members expressed general support for Congressman Davis’ effort to obtain funding for Metro. However, members expressed concern to Mr. Womack regarding the legislation’s requirement that all state/local contributions to WMATA come exclusively from dedicated funding sources. State and local leaders have indicated that restricting jurisdictions from considering appropriation of additional funds for Metro could seriously harm the Metro system.

Mr. Womack said he appreciated the CAC’s interest and would take the committee’s comments into consideration. He indicated the legislation was likely to be modified before it proceeds.

The Transportation/Land Use Connection

Strengthening the link between land use and transportation planning has long been a priority of the CAC. A number of important land use issues found their way onto the CAC agenda in 2005:

- ***The Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.*** Since its inception in 2001, the committee has maintained a close relationship with the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. In fact, the study originated from a 2000 CAC resolution that asked the TPB to perform an analysis of various transportation and land use

scenarios. CAC members have actively participated in the working group that oversees the study. In 2003, the CAC requested that the study look at a “region undivided” scenario that would shift some of the future growth in jobs and housing to the eastern side of the region.

In 2004 and 2005, the CAC hosted public outreach meetings called “What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?” that examined regional transportation challenges and some of the impacts of the scenarios examined in the study. Those public meetings are described below.

- **Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Recommendations.** A COG/TPB analysis in July found that the federal base closings recommendations would increase driving and decrease transit use. On a regional scale the impacts were found to be relatively small, but at a jurisdictional or community level, the impacts could be significant.

Members of the CAC agreed that the BRAC proposal would not take land use and transportation policy in the right direction.

- **Cooperative Land Use Forecasting.** CAC members were concerned in 2005 that anticipated job growth (53%) is expected to significantly outpace population growth (38%) between 2000 and 2030. These forecasts mean the region will face a shortage of nearly half a million housing units by 2030 – and this shortage will lead to increased congestion as commuters drive longer distances to get to jobs.

In the spring, the D.C. Office of Planning called attention to the jobs/housing imbalance, noting that the “projections are alarming.” The CAC concurred with this assessment and encouraged regional leaders to take policy steps to address the problem.

- **Activity Centers/Clusters.** The committee was pleased that TPB staff performed an analysis of how projects in the CLRP support the regional core and regional activity clusters. Among other things, the analysis found that:
 - The number of activity clusters with rail stations is increasing;
 - Households, but not jobs, are becoming more concentrated in activity clusters;
 - The share of auto commute trips to activity clusters is decreasing; and
 - Transit use is high in activity clusters, especially the core clusters.

The CAC passed a resolution in October (attached) expressing support for the analysis and noting the committee’s continuing concerns about economic disparities between eastern and western sides of the region that were highlighted in the analysis. In particular, the analysis showed that land around Metro stations on the eastern side of the region is underutilized and has experienced insufficient economic development.

The committee also expressed concern that the TPB staff used activity *clusters*, not *centers*, in the analysis. Members noted that the clusters are larger than the centers, and therefore the analysis was exaggerating positive impacts of the CLRP.

Beltway HOT Lanes

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The committee passed a resolution (attached) on April 14 regarding a project to add high-occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes to the Beltway in Virginia. The resolution asked the TPB to not include the HOT lanes in a list of projects that would be tested for air quality conformity and subsequently considered for inclusion in the CLRP.

Eleven members voted in support of the resolution, while two abstained.

Members supporting the resolution said they were not simply opposed to the project, but were concerned about the lack of project oversight and public information. They also said that VDOT had refused to analyze HOT lane alternatives besides the proposal offered by Fluor-Daniel or to issue a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement subsequent to the major rescoping of the Beltway EIS. Supporters of the resolution further said that the Beltway HOT lane project, as currently framed, was inconsistent with the TPB Value Pricing Task Force goals, which promote public transit as “an integral part of a system of variably priced lanes.” The task force goals were approved by the TPB in April 2005.

Members abstaining on the resolution expressed concern that the CAC in recent years had not opposed specific projects and this resolution could be setting a precedent.

The Need for Better Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordination at WMATA

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Late in the year, the CAC discussed a very practical issue – the need for better pedestrian and bicycle coordination at Metro, including the need for a dedicated staff person to perform this role.

The committee discussed the fact that a number of WMATA stations have been identified as needing specific pedestrian and bicycle improvements. In order to realize those improvements, committee members said a WMATA staff position should be designated or created with at least substantial part-time responsibility for ped/bike coordination.

CAC members agreed that this need should be brought to the attention of TPB members. A ped/bike coordinator makes good business sense for WMATA because it could result in increased ridership. It also makes sense for the region’s jurisdictions that need support in their efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle access at transit stations.

In response to the CAC report at the TPB meeting on December 21, a number of TPB members expressed support for creating a ped/bike coordinator position at WMATA. The WMATA representative at the meeting indicated she believed the recommendations was “worth considering.” TPB Chairman Mendelson requested that TPB staff look into arranging for Metro staff to make a presentation at the TPB’s January meeting.

The CAC will monitor this issue as it proceeds in 2006.

Public Forums: “What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?”

At the CAC’s request, TPB staff has developed a public presentation called “What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?” that has been used in a number of public forums around the region and at meetings at COG.

The presentation begins by looking at regional challenges related to transportation and land use—such as the jobs/housing imbalance, the east-west economic divide and the need for more transportation oriented-development (TOD). It then describes various alternative “what if” futures that are based on scenarios in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS). For example, what if people lived closer to their jobs? What if there was more housing in the region? What if people lived and worked closer to transit? The presentation discusses regional and localized impacts of the scenarios on various transportation measures, such as vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and transit use.

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The presentation was first developed last year, and tested in two public forums in December of 2004 in Gaithersburg, Maryland and Fair Lakes, Virginia. From the input received at those two meetings, it was clear that the regional perspective of the presentation was too broad and too abstract to have an impact on participants. Citizens want to understand how the regional scenarios would affect them on a local basis.

After the two initial meetings, CAC members asked staff to rework the presentation to show more localized information. CAC Chair Dennis Jaffe formed a working group on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study that helped guide the revisions. The working group was chaired by CAC Vice Chair Emmet Tydings.

Staff spent the first half of 2005 revising the presentation to include data on scenario impacts at a local level. The new presentation can be tailored to each locality where it is presented. The presentation was also revised to include information from the study’s first major transportation scenario, which would dramatically expand the region’s public transit system.

In the fall of 2005, CAC public forums were held in Oxon Hill, Takoma Park and in the Dulles area. The presentations for each meeting can be viewed online at www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/ (Go to “TPB Citizens Advisory Committee” and see “Documents.”)

At each meeting, citizens zeroed in on different aspects of the scenarios. In Oxon Hill, for example, people were very interested in learning about the transit facilities that are being studied, including rail over the Wilson Bridge. They were also interested in how land around existing Metro stations might be better utilized. Participants in the Dulles Corridor meeting were more concerned with how land around the planned rail line could be best used.

All the meetings gave citizens the chance to consider the study’s “what ifs” and to ask local

and state leaders some "how to" questions. In other words, participants had the opportunity to ask: "What will it take to get these things done?"

The CAC intends to continue the "What If" forums in 2006.

Recommendations on CLRP/TIP Information and Analysis

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CAC Chair Dennis Jaffe formed a working group to develop recommendations on ways to improve information on and analysis of the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The working group was chaired by Steve Caflich, CAC member from Maryland.

The working group developed the recommendations summarized below. The full recommendations are provided in a separate report.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Improve Public Information

Goal: CLRP/TIP information should be accurate, useful and user-friendly. Information on specific projects, as well as data on the overall plan, should be readily available.

Recommendations:

- Continue planned improvements:
 - Improve public comment postings on the web.
 - Develop a web-based CLRP homepage.
 - Implement an online project database.
- Provide better project information, such as concise project cost information.
- Make public comments more useful to decision makers.
- Conduct a survey of newsletter readers.

2. Provide More Analysis, Earlier in the Process

Goal: In order to have meaningful impact, analysis must be made available earlier and must be more user-friendly.

Recommendations:

- Continue planned improvements:
 - Provide more user-friendly analysis like the brochure containing analysis of the current CLRP.
- Seek input from the CAC and citizens to determine what types of system performance information would be most useful for public discussion.
- Develop more effective methods for presenting analysis.
- Make specific enhancements/additions to CLRP analysis:

- Focus analysis on activity centers instead of activity clusters.
- Consider analyses to supplement or replace the accessibility to jobs analysis.
- Clearly present information on land use inputs and their interaction with travel demand modeling.

3. Consider Changes in the Planning Process

Goal: In order to optimize the improvements recommended above, and to provide a fuller context in which the public can understand transportation decision making, the TPB should consider fundamental changes in the planning process.

Recommendations:

- The TPB should:
 - Lengthen the CLRP/TIP development cycle or identify another way to permit more time to **integrate analysis and strategic thinking into the development of the CLRP and the TIP.**
 - Ask the implementing agencies to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen—either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional (Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and D.C.) level or by enhancing existing subregional meetings/events.
 - Develop a list or plan of unfunded regional transportation priorities. The development of this plan could start with the projects that have been identified for study in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

At its meeting on January 12, 2006, the full CAC approved these recommendations and asked that they be forwarded to the TPB.

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ATTACHMENTS

2005 CAC Resolutions and Letters

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
For The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

April 19, 2005

Daniel Tangherlini, Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Robert Flanagan, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Pierce Homer, Secretary, Virginia Department of Transportation
Phil Mendelson, Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Michael Knapp, First Vice Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Catherine Hudgins, Second Vice Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
David Snyder, Chairman, Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportations Systems Policy Task Force (MOITS) for the Transportation Planning Board
Michelle Pourciau, Deputy Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Marsha Kaiser, Director, Office of Programming and Planning, Maryland Department of Transportation,
Jo Anne Sorenson, Virginia Department of Transportation
Ron Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Much constructive effort and discussion have taken place through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board concerning incident response coordination and communication by our region's transportation agencies.

It has been understood that efforts by the TPB's Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportations Systems Policy Task Force have led to a consensus among the local Departments of Transportation in support of establishing CapCom, a transportation coordination program, to bolster the region's preparedness. It has been proposed that CapCom be housed under the Mid-Atlantic Communications Inter-Operability Partnership (MACIP) at the University of Maryland.

On behalf of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Transportation Planning Board, I am writing to encourage a deliberative but prompt conclusion to the exploratory stage of this effort and a clear and concerted, region-wide commitment to take expeditious action to implement the recommendations of the MOITS Policy Task Force. It is now more than three and one half years since 9/11.

Do you support the establishment of CapCom? If you do not, could you articulate the reasons? Any meritorious perspective warrants careful – and expeditious – consideration. It is particularly critical at this point that there be a clear consensus of top-level, regional support for establishing CapCom – or, in the alternative, at least clarity and urgency with respect to considering any other option or viewpoint.

If you do support establishing CapCom, do you favor your local department of transportation committing its proportionate share of \$3.2 million for the estimated, ongoing annual capital and operating costs? Assuming the \$2 million approved recently by the U.S. House of Representatives is approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush, it is expected to reach our region at the end of 2005. But without securing sufficient monies sooner to meet start-up costs, the need for CapCom remains unfulfilled.

On behalf of the CAC, I urge all recipients of this letter to meet together for a deliberative and conclusive discussion on: our region's needs relative to the ability of transportation agencies to respond to and communicate with the public regarding consequential incidents; appropriate solutions; and a financial plan to implement them. A group "summit" discussion would provide the opportunity to air and address any significant questions or concerns so that we can overcome compartmentalization and delay. This region cannot afford to see this critical issue languish.

Soon, the constructive conversation and effort on this issue will have gone on for four years. The time has come for a deliberative conclusion and expeditious action to honor our paramount obligation to ensure public safety.

Sincerely,

Dennis Jaffe

Dennis Jaffe
Chair
Citizen Advisory Committee for the Transportation Planning Board

cc: Judith Davis, Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Jay Fiset, Vice Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Anthony Williams, Vice Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Bruce Williams, Chair, National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council
Phil Tarnoff, Center for Advanced Transportation Technology

**RESOLUTION
OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) TO THE
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
BOARD (TPB)**

**ON CONSIDERING BELTWAY WIDENING
IN THE CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE PLAN (CLRP)**

Approved by the TPB CAC, April 14, 2005

Whereas published peer-reviewed studies by experts at the Federal Highway Administration show that the addition of two new toll lanes in each direction to the Beltway in Virginia would be much more costly and spur 12% more traffic while producing only one-third as much toll revenue, compared to the addition of one new toll lane and applying toll traffic management to two existing Beltway lanes,

Whereas these and other studies also suggest that toll traffic management of existing or new Beltway lanes is likely to be most cost-effective if a significant share of toll revenues are used to support new or enhanced public transportation services benefiting those who travel in the corridor to help manage and reduce traffic growth,

Whereas VDOT and Fluor Corporation have stated that tolls from a 12-lane Beltway widening project in northern Virginia would generate insufficient revenue to pay for the costs of the two new HOT lanes in each direction, requiring additional investment of several hundred million dollars of scarce taxpayer funds by VDOT, with no projected toll revenue available to pay for providing improved transit services in the corridor at a time when public transportation revenues are already strained in the metropolitan region, forcing fare increases and service cutbacks,

Whereas the Transportation Planning Board's Value Pricing Task Force in January 2005 adopted goals that, "transit bus service should be an integral part of a system of variably-priced lanes, beginning with project planning and design, in order to move the maximum number of people, not just the maximum number of vehicles. Transit buses should have reasonably free-flowing and direct access to variably-priced lanes from major activity centers, key rail stations, and park-and-ride lots, so that transit buses do not have to cross several congested general purpose lanes. Transit buses using the variably-priced lanes should have clearly designated and accessible stops at activity centers or park-and-ride lots, and signal priority or dedicated bus lanes to ensure efficient access to and from activity centers."

Whereas the VDOT environmental review process and the Virginia Public-Private Transportation Partnership review process for the proposed widening of the Beltway in northern Virginia have considered only a single 12-lane alternative to introduce toll traffic management in this corridor, without any serious evaluation of 10-lane or 8-lane toll traffic management options that might better support improvements to public

transportation, and reduction of adverse public health, air quality, and community impacts while boosting transportation system performance at lower costs,

Whereas the design of the proposed 12-lane Beltway widening project has not yet incorporated a full set of elements to support operation of express bus stops served efficiently by the HOT lanes, nor access for pedestrians, bicycles, and park-and-ride to such stops, nor considered whether the arterial roads that connect to the Beltway and their interchanges with the Beltway have adequate capacity for a 12-lane Beltway, and when these roads and interchanges might be expanded and by whom,

Whereas, local elected officials and the public cannot make informed choices in the absence of information about the costs and benefits of competing alternatives when road expansions of the magnitude proposed for the Beltway are advanced and when new and controversial policies such as road pricing are moved forward for implementation,

Therefore, the CAC recommends --

(1) that the TPB not add the proposed widening of the Beltway to the list of projects for testing in the CLRP until reasonable available alternatives have been more fully considered in the environmental review process by VDOT.

(2) if the TPB chooses to add the proposed widening to the CLRP network for testing, in addition to the proposed 12-lane alternative with 2 new toll lanes in each direction, at a minimum, an additional 10-lane alternative should be tested that include two or three toll managed lanes in each direction serving expanded public transportation, in accord with the goals adopted by the TPB Value Pricing Task Force in January 2005, and the analysis should explicitly identify effects of any proposed Beltway widening on all roads intersecting the Beltway.

Approved by a vote of 11 in favor and two abstaining.

RESOLUTION

Regarding the Regional Transportation Coordination Program
Provisionally Known as CapCom

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

October 13, 2005

Given the CAC's long-standing and continuing interest in emergency preparedness and in the development of the regional transportation coordination program provisionally known as CapCom, the committee:

- Recommends approval of Item 7 on the TPB's October 19 agenda, to amend the FY 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the draft FY 2006-2011 TIP to proceed with funding a regional transportation coordination program.
- Supports efforts to ensure the Volpe Center study on the establishment of the regional program should move forward collaboratively with respect to input from all three jurisdictions and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).
- Encourages state and other regional decision-makers to identify additional funding to make the regional transportation program sustainable on an ongoing basis.

Approved by voice vote with one abstention, October 13, 2005

RESOLUTION

Regarding the Analysis of How This Year's CLRP and TIP Address the Priorities
Established in the 2005 Solicitation Document

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

October 13, 2005

Given the CAC's long-standing and continuing interest in land use/transportation coordination, emergency preparedness, and improved transportation system management and operations, the committee provides the following comments on the TPB staff analysis of the 2005 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- The CAC is pleased that TPB staff has developed analysis that is responsive to the three priorities that were highlighted in the Project Solicitation Document for the 2005 CLRP and the FY2006-2011 TIP. The three priorities, which were laid out by TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson in January 2005, include the following:
 - Implement traffic signal optimization;
 - Improve regional transportation coordination for incident management; and
 - Identify how projects support the regional core and regional activity centers.
- The CAC is looking forward to the forthcoming update of the activity centers maps to reflect the Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecasts and recent changes in local land use plans.
- The CAC remains concerned about economic development and the underutilization of land around Metrorail stations, particularly those stations on the eastern side of the region.
- The CAC urges that future analysis of the CLRP be based on activity *centers* instead of activity *clusters*.

Approved by unanimous vote, October 13, 2005