

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

Technical Committee Minutes

For meeting of

March 5, 2010

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1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the February 5, 2010 Technical Committee Meeting

Minutes were approved as written.

2. Review of the Final Draft FY 2011 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)

Mr. Ramfos referred to the handout that was in the agenda packet and reviewed the information that was presented to the TPB on the draft FY 2011 CCWP at the February 17, 2010 meeting.

He stated that the document had been released for public comment on February 11th at the CAC meeting. He also stated that the document was updated to reflect Virginia's participation in some additional program administration tasks for the Employer Outreach TERM.

The final draft document would be presented to the TPB for approval on March 17th.

3. Review of the Final Draft FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Miller distributed the final draft of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY 2011 (July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011). He said that the draft of the document was presented to the TPB at its February 17 meeting, and pointed out the changes in this version from the February version. He said that the TPB will be asked to adopt the program on March 17 and it will be submitted to FHWA and FTA for their approval by July 1. He reviewed the budget totals in Table 1 and explained that approval of the USDOT federal FY 2010 appropriation is before Congress for action.

Mr. Miller reviewed the process of identifying certain projects and funding in the current FY 2010 program that would not be completed by June 30 for carryover to FY 2011. He then reviewed two memos on the proposed FY 2010 project amendments and carryover of FY 2010 funding to the FY 2011 UPWP. He said the carryover items would be incorporated into the final version of the FY 2011 document after TPB approval at the March 18 meeting.

Mr. Milone explained the consultant-assisted effort to be carried over from the travel demand models work activity. Mr. Griffiths reviewed the INRIX inc. highway speed data project to be carried over from the regional data clearinghouse work activity. Mr. Meese said that there did not seem to be an issue with making the historical speed data

available to local agencies.

Mr. Kellogg said that for the WMATA Technical Assistance Program he would include a study of the development impacts around Metrorail stations. Mr. Erenrich inquired about the study. Mr. Kellogg said that it will look back on the regional development impacts since the system opened in 1976. Mr. Griffiths recommended that it should identify success stories and future opportunities. Mr. Erenrich commented that such a study is difficult because no one can know what would have happened at a particular location if Metro had not been there.

The Committee recommended that the final version of the FY 2011 UPWP and the FY 2009 amendments and carryover funding be presented for the Board's approval at its March 18 meeting.

4. Update on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2010 CLRP and FY 2011-2016 TIP

Mr. Hodgson announced that because several agencies were not able to meet the March 1, 2010 deadline for project submissions, the deadline would be extended to April 2, 2010. He distributed printouts of project listings contained in the "iTIP" database as of March 1, 2010 at 5pm, separated into handouts for Maryland and Virginia agencies, as well as the District of Columbia and WMATA. He stated that these printouts were meant to assist agency staff in updating their project listings in the online database. He also asked that agency staff thoroughly review all of their records so that the data on projects contained in the database could be made available to the public through the online public search interface that is already developed and waiting to be deployed.

5. Update on Draft Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2010 CLRP and FY 2011-2016 TIP

Ms. Posey distributed an updated schedule for the conformity analysis. She briefly reviewed the conformity scope of work that had been included in the mail out items. She pointed out Table 1 (Summary of Technical Approach), and noted that the process will be the same as in the last conformity analysis except for updated land activity files. She stated that the analysis years are 2011, 2020, 2030, and 2040.

Ms. Posey reviewed the schedule. She noted that the project input deadline is April 2, a week before the April Technical Committee meeting. She stated that the TPB is scheduled to approve inputs at the May 19th meeting, and that the conformity analysis and CLRP and TIP are scheduled to be approved in November.

Mr. Milone asked about bus fare input assumptions. Ms. Posey remarked that the most current fares available at the time that the travel demand is conducted will be used. Mr. Erenrich said that the Metro board should approve new fares in late April or early May. Mr. Kirby said that it was necessary to know what fares will be used when inputs are approved at the May 19th TPB meeting. He noted that the region is required to do the 4-year major update to the CLRP with federal approval by April 2011. He also pointed out that there will be difficulties related to the financial plan, and emphasized that Metro funding is critical, citing the upcoming expiration of Metro Matters funding, and the importance of the Davis bill.

Mr. Kirby asked if the fare changes would be immediate, and Mr. Erenrich replied that they would. Mr. Erenrich noted that some proposals would substantially increase fares. He also commented on the lack of capacity on the Metro system for some of the proposals. He suggested that the TPB might have to guarantee a base level supply of transit. Mr. Kirby listed two main issues for conformity: 1) meeting budgets, and 2) have assurances that we can provide the services that have been assumed. Chairman Verzosa noted that difficulty in providing local funding may be an issue. Mr. Miller reminded the group that there will be a financial planning meeting in March.

6. Update on the TPB Regional Priority Bus Project Grant under the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program

Mr. Canan informed the Committee that USDOT announced the grant awards for the \$1.5 billion TIGER program on February 17, 2010, the morning of the TPB meeting. More than 1,400 applications totaling \$60 billion were submitted from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Of these, 51 grants were awarded, including \$59 million for portions of the application submitted by COG/TPB for the Washington region. Of this amount, \$13.6 million was awarded to project components in the District of Columbia; \$14.8 million was awarded to components in Suburban Maryland; and \$30.4 million was awarded to components in Northern Virginia.

The award for the Washington region is for (1) the 13 projects in the priority corridors network identified in the application, (2) the I-95/I-395 multimodal improvements, and (3) the Takoma / Langley Transit Center.

Shortly after the USDOT award announcement, FTA contacted COG/TPB to announce that FTA will be the modal administration responsible for awarding and administering the grant and that an FTA project manager will be designated to lead the effort. This project manager should contact COG/TPB with more specific information in the next few weeks. Staff informed members of the Scenarios Task Force of the award and indicated that follow-up information will be forthcoming upon receiving more direction from FTA.

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Meanwhile, COG/TPB staff has been meeting internally to begin ramping up its effort and identify what it believes could be initial requirements.

Mr. Canan explained that while staff awaits further direction from FTA, it will contact project owners to identify a primary point of contact and advise them to begin scoping out their projects in an effort to anticipate grant funding.

Mr. Owolabi asked Mr. Canan to clarify how FTA will administer the grant and whether the \$2 million identified in the grant application for program management was awarded. Mr. Canan explained that so far, the only understanding staff has concerning administration of the grant is that FTA has been designated the modal administration responsible for grant administration, and additional guidance is forthcoming. Mr. Kirby explained that the \$2 million requested for program management was not included in the award. This latter development has raised questions among both COG/TPB and project owners how the grant will be administered. The answer to that question will have implications on needed staffing and funding resources for COG/TPB and/or project owners. Mr. Kirby contacted FTA to express concern that the amount requested for program management was not included in the award. Ms. Barlow asked if COG/TPB intends to hire a consultant to support program management activities. Because FTA has not yet explained how the grant will be administered, COG/TPB does not yet know if a consultant will be hired, although that option does exist.

Mr. Kirby underscored the importance that success is critical for both grantees as well as for USDOT because this is a new program and way of funding transportation projects that could have implications for future efforts. Because of this, Mr. Kirby further urged project owners to begin scoping efforts quickly to begin building momentum for project implementation.

Mr. Erenrich asked whether a TIP amendment would be needed right away to include these funded projects. The Committee agreed that an amendment would be necessary but it would be better to wait until there is better understanding of how FTA will administer the grant before amending the TIP. Mr. Erenrich expressed concern that some of the project components will require NEPA documentation, even if only a Categorical Exclusion (CE), and that these efforts should get underway soon. He also questioned whether FTA would simply work directly with project owners since many of them already have working agreements in place, or whether a new structure would be established with TPB. Ms. Barlow explained that since COG/TPB is the applicant, it is likely that FTA will administer the grant through COG/TPB, which would subsequently administer funding with project owners.

The FTA Region 3 administrator has been in communication with the Washington FTA staff, and it appears that Brian Glenn, FTA Washington office, will be involved. He is familiar with the project owners and the proposed project.

Finally, Mr. Foster expressed his appreciation for staff efforts on the TIGER grant. Mr. Kirby responded that the project owners have been extremely helpful and expressed his thanks for their support for this effort.

7. Update on the Transportation Funding Implications of a New Jobs Stimulus Bill

Mr. Kirby briefed the Committee on the transportation funding implications of the jobs stimulus legislation currently under consideration in Congress that would extend federal highway and transit funding at the pre-rescission FY 2009 levels to December 31, 2010. He explained that it would remove the effects of the recent recession and would include \$20 billion in general revenues because the Highway Trust Fund is in deficit. He commented on how the new authorization of SAFETELY-LU has moved through the House but not as yet been considered in the Senate. He noted that the biggest issue is how to fund a new law to address the daunting challenges facing the nation's transportation system without raising the gas tax.

8. Briefing on the Regional "Street Smart" Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign

Mr. Farrell spoke to a PowerPoint on the Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign.

Mr. Malouf asked if Mr. Farrell had notified the Police Departments. Mr. Farrell replied that he had, through the COG Police Chiefs Committee.

Mr. Thomas asked if letters requesting financial support had been sent. Mr. Farrell replied that the letters would be sent shortly.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

9. Briefing on the Washington Region Transportation Planning Process Certification Review

Ms. Barlow with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) briefed the Committee on the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Washington region scheduled for April 15, 19-20, 2010. She presented a comprehensive PowerPoint on

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the purpose, background, organization, and topics to be covered by the review. She explained that six federal staff from the region and 8 federal resource staff will participate in the two-day review sessions on April 19-20. She said she had sent 150 questions on the TPB planning process to Ron Kirby on March 3 and that the responses were due March 24.

Mr. Kirby indicated that TPB staff would respond to all of the questions. He noted that a resource staff from EPA on the review team was new compared to previous planning reviews. He said that he looked forward to the review sessions and the report on the observations to the TPB at its April 21 meeting.

Mr. Erenrich inquired if these were the same questions as in the 2006 certification review.

Mr. Kirby said that TPB did not receive written questions in previous reviews. He also noted that the questions addressed new planning topics such as climate change, livability and sustainability.

Mr. Owolabi commented that the presentation was very informative and asked what happens if an MPO process is not certified.

Ms. Barlow said that potentially the TIP and long range plan could be held up if the planning process is deficient. However, she noted that she did not anticipate anything like that in this region, and said that no MPO gets a blemish free report.

Mr. Kirby commented that the sooner any problems are identified in the complex planning process the better, and welcomed suggestions for improvements.

**10. Briefing on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program**

Mr. DesJardin, COG's Director of Community Planning and Services, presented a PowerPoint on the HUD Request for Comments on the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and distributed copies of a draft response letter. The presentation outlined the history of the Sustainable Communities initiative and the process for submitting comments.

Mr. DesJardin stated the Program sought to integrate land use, transportation and environmental planning at the Federal level and that a total of \$100 million was available nationally in the program and that large metropolitan areas, such as the Washington region, would be eligible for a maximum of \$5 million. He stated that COG staff met with HUD staff and expressed interest in pursuing a regional grant application,

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and that COG invited members of the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition, the Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee, the Housing Directors Advisory Committee, and others to a March 1 meeting to discuss the request for comments and review a draft response letter. He noted in the response letter that COG stated that regional councils and MPOs should be given preference in the application process.

Mr. DesJardin also stated that the COG Board was to be briefed on the final comment letter during their March 10 meeting, in advance of submittal to HUD on Friday March 12, and Mr. Robertson, COG's Executive Director, was scheduled to brief the TPB on the letter and comments during their March 17 meeting.

Mr. Ehrenrich asked what COG and the region can do to secure funding. Mr. DesJardin responded that COG staff was working to ensure a successful grant application and noted that no regional council received funding from the HUD NSP-2 foreclosure grant funding under ARRA.

Mr. Owalabi said that he had participated in the meeting by conference call and noted that the region could always use additional funds for planning.

Mr. Kirby noted that the Request for Comments specifically recommends that groups or consortia of regional stakeholders be a part of the application process, and that several TPB members were particularly interested in the Grant opportunity.

11. Briefing on Request by Martz National Coach for Federal Assistance for Commuter Bus Service between Fredericksburg and Washington, DC

Mr. Kirby updated the committee on the Martz National Coach proposal for Federal assistance under the FTA section 5307 funding program. The 5307 program is driven by public and private transit providers, specifically by reporting its operations activities and vehicle miles services. Martz has expressed interest in receiving those funds which are currently divided among WMATA, MTA, and PRTC to support Metro, MARC, VRE, PRTC, and FRED services that are provided outside the WMATA Compact area. Martz is asking that the 2010 TIP be amended to reflect their service to the overall region's congestion/air quality reduction efforts. There have been earlier discussions about 5307 funds being allotted to vanpools and Martz's proposal does provide an opportunity for more funding dollars to come into the region. One entity will have to designate the recipient of the funds with Martz then receiving some part of the overall amount based on the current formula.

Research into how other parts of the country handle these types of funding allocations for private transit providers is currently underway and will be done by Mr. Ramfos of

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COG staff. Given Mr. Ramfos's experience with running similar programs in other parts of the country his knowledge into this area will be helpful for the Committee.

Mr. Erenrich stated that the County has had discussions on what funds would be available from the 5307 program. WMATA received all of the funds with none going to Montgomery County. This has encouraged RideOn to pursue other venues of funding sources. However, the formula stipulated should be followed with those operators outside of WMATA receiving the dollars available or some type of capital improvements in their particular areas of operation.

Mr. Foster stated that PRTC has not agreed to be a recipient of the 5307 monies that Martz is asking for and that Martz suggested that PRTC be the recipient for the funds Martz is seeking, however, PRTC has not considered doing so at this time. There are difficulties in the procurement process and requirements that the Federal program asks of providers that Martz would have to address before any funds or any decision on funds being allocated to them could be made.

Mr. Kirby reiterated that once the Committee is able to learn what other parts of the country are doing in regards to private transit providers and 5307 funding there will be an informed response to Martz's request.

Mr. McFarland said that Martz's request should be rejected and that any funding should remain within the WMATA Compact. Since there are already designated recipients for the 5307 funds there is no obligation to expand the list of those receiving monies.

Mr. Kirby stated that there is an interest in counting as many possible options in the region for funding and the positive effects of reducing problems of air quality and congestion. The difficulty is how those funds would be allocated if the allotments are spread over a large number of recipients instead of one or two recipients who then allocate the dollars available on some existing formula for distribution.

Mr. Erenrich suggested that the research being done on this matter reflect what New York State does for private transit providers. The New York program requires that the first year of operation be paid for by the private provider and then the second year the transit operator can apply for funding assistance based on appropriate factors. Mr. McFarland asked that part of the research include what the states (New York and New Jersey respectively) require in setting rates for ridership. Martz currently has no requirement. Rather they set rates according to current "market" conditions.

Mr. Kirby stated that the Committee would be briefed with the research being done currently and then would ask the committee to consider a response to Martz's request.

12. Briefing on Schedule for the FY 2011 Transportation/Land Use Connection (TLC) Program

Mr. Swanson announced that on March 12, the TPB would issue the Call for Projects for the FY2011 round of technical assistance under the TPB's Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program. He said the TLC program was initiated in 2007 and will have completed 40 projects by the end of this fiscal year. He said a workshop for potential applicants will be held on April 1 and the deadline for project applications will be May 12.

Mr. Kirby noted that the TLC program reflects livability and sustainability objectives, which the Obama Administration is promoting. These are the core objectives of the forthcoming HUD sustainable communities planning grants program, which COG is likely to apply for.

13. Other Business

Mr. Griffiths distributed a handout from the February 18 Scenario Task Force meeting that showed changes in travel patterns for the Washington region.

14. Adjourn