

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Andrew J. Meese, AICP
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DATE: July 7, 2006

SUBJECT: Potential Tasks for a Freight Planning Consultant

Among the recommendations of the recent federal certification of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) process was to expand regional freight planning. Up to now, freight planning undertaken in the TPB process has been limited, within overall Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) development and travel forecasting models development (with related field data collection; additional travel model enhancement activities addressing trucks are currently underway). Following release of increased federal SAFETEA-LU funding in late 2005, the TPB amended a separate freight planning task to the FY 2006 UPWP; such a task also appears in the FY2007 UPWP. During the latter half of FY2006, TPB staff undertook background research and held a series of interviews with key member agency contacts on this topic.

A key recommendation from these discussions was for a limited, short-term consultant study (e.g. three-to-six months, \$50,000) to lay the groundwork for expanded regional freight planning. Hiring an expert consultant to identify issues and opportunities was seen as an expedient manner to proceed, and is consistent with freight planning approaches recently taken by the state departments of transportation, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, and other agencies. Potential consultant tasks include:

- Compiling a brief, initial inventory of the existing metropolitan area freight network: highway, rail, air, ports, intermodal facilities, connectors, and distribution centers
- Identifying existing metropolitan area freight data sets, and making recommendations on future data needs, activities, and analytical tools
- Examining the macroscale economic impact of freight movement
- Providing recommendations for ongoing metropolitan planning activities, and enhancing integration of freight considerations by other tasks/committees
- Identifying options for outreach
 - Recommending ways to engage public and private sector freight shippers and providers of freight transportation not typically involved in the TPB process
 - Exploring options for meetings and input:
 - Holding occasional special events
 - Creating an ad hoc task force of freight stakeholders
 - Creating a standing subcommittee on freight
 - Special surveys or interviews.

It is envisioned that a Request for Proposals (RFP) be developed and issued, and a contractor selected, in the early fall 2006 time frame.