

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

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**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
May 20, 2015**

Members and Alternates Present

Charles Allen, DC Council
Ron Burns, Frederick County
James Davenport, Prince William County
Allison Davis, WMATA
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County
Dan Emerine, DC Office of Planning
Dennis Enslinger, City of Gaithersburg
Lyn Erickson, MDOT
Jay Fisette, Arlington County
Tawanna Gaines, Maryland Senate
Seth Grimes, City of Takoma Park
Jason Groth, Charles County
Neil Harris, Gaithersburg City Council
Konrad Herling, City of Greenbelt
Cathy Hudgins, Fairfax County
Sandra Jackson, FHWA
John J. Jenkins, Prince William County
Shyam Kannan, WMATA
Tim Lovain, City of Alexandria
Bridget D. Newton, City of Rockville
Mark Rawlings, DC DOT
Kelly Russell, City of Frederick
Peter Schwartz, Fauquier County
Elissa Silverman, DC Council
David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Todd Turner, Prince George's County
Jonathan Way, City of Manassas
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County/DPW&T
Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park
Sam Zimbabwe, DDOT

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Kanti Srikanth
Robert Griffiths
Andrew Meese
Eric Randall
Rich Roisman
Dusan Vuksan
Eulalie Lucas
John Swanson
Michael Farrell
Andrew Austin
Ben Hampton
Bryan Hayes
Sergio Ritacco
Lamont Cobb
Debbie Leigh
Deborah Etheridge
Paul DesJardin COG/DCPS
Steve Kania COG/OPA
Megan Goodman COG/OPA
Bill Orleans Resident
Joseph Siegmann Resident
Jameshia Peterson DDOT
Pierre Holloman Alexandria
Tina Slater Purple Line Now
Nancy Abeles TPB/CAC
Matt Tingstrom MDOT/WSTC
John Thomas Montgomery County/DOT
Tamara Vatnick DC Office of Planning
John Hartline Tri-County Council for Southern MD
Graydon Vauv PWC DOT
Patrick Durany Supervisor Jenkin's Office
Betsy Massie PRTC

1. Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities

Vice-Chair Lovain announced that Chair Mendelson would not attend the meeting.

Joseph Siegmann, from the Save Dunn Loring group, spoke regarding VDOT's project to expand toll lane access at the I-495/I-66 interchange. He said that Save Dunn Loring proposes to end the I-66 toll lanes between Chain Bridge Road and Nutley Street, and offer five general-purpose lanes on I-495. Mr. Siegmann stated that this proposal would reduce the amount of takings, minimize

construction costs, alleviate the loss of red X lane for weekend travel flow, eliminate the chokepoint past Nutley St, and minimize impacts to the environment through less noise and air pollution as well as less paved surface area. He said that the proposal's negatives could be mitigated through better signage. He also stated the proposal gives more time to VDOT to continue traffic studies regarding the impact of toll lanes on congestion.

2. Approval of Minutes of March 18 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 18 meeting. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Mr. Rawlings reported that the Technical Committee met on May 1 and discussed five items: A study from WMATA looking at ways to improve walkability and prioritize bike and pedestrian access at all 91 Metrorail stations; a briefing from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation on the Tier II environmental process regarding a higher speed rail project between Washington, D.C. and Richmond; a briefing on the activities of COG's multi-sector working group to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; a briefing on the development of a regional list of transportation projects with no identified funding in the CLRP; and a briefing on the Peak Car Travel report, regarding national research and regional trends on car use and vehicle miles of travel (VMT).

4. Report of the Citizen Advisory Committee

Mr. Summersgill reported that the CAC met on May 18 and received a briefing on traffic safety. He commented that it seems the TPB does not receive enough information from member states on accidents, and that existing data does not properly compare neither automobile, pedestrian nor cyclist accidents or fatalities. He also reported that TPB staff briefed the CAC on the activities of the Multi-Sector Working Group to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and would provide comments pending the results of the groups work later this summer.

5. Report of Actions of the Steering Committee and Announcements and Updates

Mr. Srikanth reported on three topics: (1) the Steering Committee actions; (2) Letters Sent/Received; and (3) Announcements and Updates.

Reporting on the Steering Committee actions of May 2, 2015, he noted that the committee has approved a request from VDOT to amend the FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include \$9 million in funding to facilitate the procurement of new rail cars for expanded VRE service, and also approved the nominations from Vice Chair Ms. Newton of Mr. Jeremy Martin as a primary member and Ms. Nancy Abeles as an alternate member to represent Maryland on the Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Martin would be filling the vacancy created when Ms. Holford moved out of the region

Referring to mailout and handout materials, Mr. Srikanth spoke about letters that had been sent and received, including a letter from the TPB to the U.S. Senate and House Committees on Environment and Public Works and Transportation and Infrastructure outlining the TPB's policy principles for reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, MAP-21. He noted two additional items: a memo on the Regional Bike to Work day event that attracted a record 17,500 riders, and a letter from the Montgomery County Council in support of the County's application to the TPB's Transportation/Land-Use Connections program to fund a study to look at improvements to signs and way finding at the Bethesda Metro Station.

Mr. Srikanth referred to the mailout materials. He said that there were announcements and updates that include: a memo on the status of eight TIGER grant projects being implemented; an update on the work of COG and WMATA regarding the January 12, 2015 smoke incident, with four additional safety actions for WMATA included to the ten announced in January; and a memo on TPB activities related to study on locations for bus staging and layover in the District of Columbia. The updates also included a letter from the COG board to the members of the region's congressional delegation to support House Resolution 990 to restore parity in federal commuter benefits between transit and parking; and a letter to the region's congressional delegation and additional members of Congress urging support to maintain WMATA's federal subsidy at \$150 million.

6. Chair's Remarks

Vice-Chair Lovain noted the prompt on the screen to commemorate the TPB's 50th Anniversary

Mr. Srikanth informed the Board that Chairman Mendelson had requested staff to look into briefing the Board at a future meeting on two topics. The first topic was COG's recent State of the Region's Infrastructure report, which included transportation infrastructure needs. The second topic was the recent AMTRAK derailment in Philadelphia. He said that staff is working to arrange a presentation on COG's Infrastructure report in June. He also said that the idea behind discussing the AMTRAK derailment in Philadelphia would be to look at it from this region's perspective on Positive Train Control, communications capability of 911/first responders and contingency planning for intercity travel in the event of the tracks being shut down in this region.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. Briefing on a Study to Identify Pedestrian/Bicycle Access Improvements at Select Rail Stations in the Washington Region

Mr. Swanson referred to his memo and described a recently completed TPB study called Transportation, Community, and Systems Preservation. He said that the Federal Highway Administration funded the study. He said that the study compiled approximately 3,000 bicycle and pedestrian access improvements at 25 Metro and Commuter rail stations in the Washington region. He said that the thesis of this study is if we improve pedestrian and bicycle access to these select rail

stations we can tap under-utilized capacity on our transit system. He noted that the study is rooted in our Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, which is to extract additional capacity out of existing transit and transportation system. He also noted that the TPB has emphasized the need to make sure that circulation within activity centers, that last mile and that first mile connection, non-motorized connections, are improved. And then finally, the Study addresses another Regional Transportation Priorities Plan element that emphasizes need to find low-cost solutions to get capacity out of places where we may not have thought it existed,

Mr. Swanson referred to the handouts that contained links to the study website and the database of projects as well as an interactive map. The database includes project specifics, source, whether it's planned but not funded, needs more study, or completed, and then some demographic information related to the actual station. The map provides a visual of the stations the user can hover over different locations and get information about the capital improvements that have been identified for these 25 opportune station areas.

The inventoried projects range in cost from about \$270,000 to \$10 million, though most are small in scale. He said that TPB staff is currently working with WAMTA to determine how this list of projects can be narrowed to identify the projects that would be most effective at increasing accessibility to these stations. He added that TPB staff is exploring ways to integrate the list of projects into existing TPB programs, like the TLC and TAP programs that provides funding assistance to localities to plan or implement projects.

Mr. Swanson mentioned WMATA's Station Access Strategic Investment plan activity that appears a clear next step for this project. He said that WMATA's ongoing work would build on the results of this study pulling to develop an inventory of access improvements at all remaining WMATA's stations, but then also going the next step to identify projects that would have highest impact. A Board member asked how much more capacity could be added to the Metro system.

Mr. Kannan responded that there are multiple ways to measure capacity. He said that according to one metric, there are approximately eight Metro stations that currently exceed their capacity during certain times of day. In regards to the limits on capacity for each of the Metro lines, he said there is a debate about whether or not the system can handle more passengers. He added that regardless of whether trips originate in the core or near the end of the line, all trains pass through the core of the region, so as long as core stations are above capacity the whole system will slow down.

8. Briefing on Metro's Connecting Communities Key Performance Indicator, Walkability Research and Station Area Strategic Investment Plan

Ms. Haldeman presented an overview of WMATA's research related to connecting communities and neighborhoods to transit stations. She said that research shows that for every ten households that are connected to a station's walk shed, there are about seven peak period walk trips to and from transit stations. She said that the Station Area Strategic Investment Plan is like the TCSP study, but includes all 67 Metro stations. In addition to the list of projects, Metro plans to prioritize the

projects based on criteria that include safety, directness of access, feasibility, cost, and equity.

Mr. Elrich asked for clarity about the seven trips that are generated for every ten households. He wondered if any place in Montgomery County was seeing such mode shares.

Mr. Srikanth said that based upon the TPB's household travel survey, households generate between eight and ten trips a day. Based on that, ten households would generate between 80 and 100 trips a day. He said that WMATA's study assumes seven of those 80 to 100 trips would occur by walking to transit that is consistent with the TPB survey data.

Mr. Kannan said that this work is based on fare box data that is disaggregated to show actual numbers for ridership throughout the day. He added that the opportunities identified by both the TCSP study and the Station Area Strategic Investment Plan present cost-effective means to utilize existing Metro capacity.

Mr. Zimbabwe asked if the study is updated regularly and if it is a tool that can be used to make prioritization decisions at the agency level.

Ms. Haldeman said that the purpose of this study is to help jurisdictions prioritize improvements. She said that WMATA staff could help with modeling.

Mr. Wojahn asked how this study could be used for planning around two new Metro stations being built near College Park.

Ms. Haldeman said that the plan could be used by developers to identify and ensure direct walking access to the transit stations.

Mr. Fisette said that he appreciates the cost-effective approach outlined by Metro. He said that he hopes that this work will encourage jurisdictions to provide more money for the TPB's TLC and TA Programs.

Mr. Srikanth said that staff expect to make the complete database of station improvements available and to encourage applicants to both TLC and TA Program monies to apply for those improvements.

Ms. Hudgins said that in addition to un-passable infrastructure, other barriers to walking include the pleasantness of a walk. She said that if a station is accessible, but the walk is unpleasant, people are less likely to walk to the station.

Ms. Haldeman said that there are examples of people who take longer walks to Metro stations because the walks are pleasant.

Mr. Snyder said that this good work should continue. He also said that the work on Metro station access should be extended to the bus system.

Mr. Herling asked if the Metro system could accommodate significant increases in ridership.

Mr. Kannan said that at least 15 Metro stations there is little room for additional capacity. He said that this is one of the big challenges facing the region.

9. Briefing on the DC2RVA High-Speed Rail Project Under Development by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Ms. Stock from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) described the timeline and alternatives for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) currently underway for the D.C. to Richmond High-Speed Rail project known as DC2RVA. She said that the project was part of an effort to develop a larger high-speed rail network in the Southeast, connecting Washington, Richmond, Atlanta, and Jacksonville, Florida. Referring to her presentation, she said that through this project DRPT hopes to improve the reliability of service, decrease travel times, and create more opportunity to increase the frequency of trains.

Mr. Allen asked about DRPT's coordination with CSX in regards to the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project in the District.

Ms. Stock said that the DC2RVA project terminates at the Long Bridge. She said that DRPT is coordinating with CSX, VRE, Amtrak, VDOT, and the Federal Rail Administration. She said that CSX and other partners are sharing modeling data and that DC2RVA will take into account the capacity increases that are part of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project.

Mr. Way asked about how DC2RVA will affect travel time between D.C. and Richmond.

Ms. Stock said that it currently takes a little more than two hours to travel from D.C. to Richmond. She said that reliability improvements might reduce travel by half an hour.

Mr. Way asked how the project expects to keep costs down while both improving reliability and speed.

Ms. Stock said that this EIS process is designed to explore alternatives and analyze potential revenue to determine which improvements are most cost effective.

Mr. Way said that the Long Bridge is going to be a bottleneck and that it would have impacts on the DC2RVA project.

Ms. Stock said that DRPT is funding a Long Bridge study that is linked with the DC2RVA study and that the two studies share modeling data.

Mr. Zimbabwe said that DDOT agrees that the Long Bridge improvements are important for the region.

Mr. Fisette said that improving speed and reliability along the D.C. to Richmond corridor is a good thing. He also asked about whether or not the study including corridor enhancements for trails.

Ms. Stock said that DRPT has received lots of feedback from people who would like to see trails built along the corridor. She added that this is the most congested rail corridor in the region and has the least room for options. She said that CSX said it is not possible to co-locate a greenway near this section of the corridor, but it is something that DRPT would like to explore.

A Board member asked whether this project would eliminate the need for passenger and freight to share the same rails.

Ms. Stock said that one of the major improvements being considered by this project is an additional third rail line that will allow trains to pass one another more efficiently.

10. Briefing on the Activities of the COG Multi-Sector Working Group to Examine and Analyze Greenhouse Gas Reductions Strategies in the Metropolitan Washington Region

Mr. Griffiths referred to his memo to describe the recent activities of the Multi-Sector Working Group. He said that the group contracted ICF to provide technical assistance with the evaluation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies. He provided an overview of the project timeline and said that the consultant is starting the technical analysis. Concurrently the working group will explore goals and strategies for different sectors, and look to what other regions have done to establish goals and targets. He said that there will be opportunities for the public to comment in September and in October.

Mr. Elrich asked about how the working group will analyze parking. He asked about whether there will be a baseline study for parking.

Mr. Griffiths said that parking is included in the strategies for travel demand management. He said that there would be a baseline comparison and estimates for 2020, 2040, and 2050.

Mr. Way asked about how the study is going to measure cost-effectiveness.

Mr. Griffiths said that cost-effectiveness would be part of the strategy analysis, which will include an estimation of costs as well as environmental and economic co-benefits. He said that these costs would be at the planning estimate level. He said that the working group would compile a report on the costs and benefits of different strategies.

Mr. Fisette said that he hopes the TPB will grapple with looking at transportation and land use contribution to the adopted COG greenhouse gas emission reductions for 40 years from now. He wondered if a percentage or specific number should be set. He also asked if that percentage or number should be incorporated as a self-imposed limit for this region in terms of how we distribute federal transportation dollars. He said that this region has experience with it in terms of air quality

where we have limits although the region does not have them set with greenhouse gases. He added that COG's Multi sector Working Group task is in early stages of the process, but that it's incumbent upon TPB to directly address that question about how and if we can have self-imposed limits for this region and how we distribute transportation dollars.

Mr. Srikanth said that the charge that the Council of Governments Board has given the group includes having the group explore the potential for establishing targets for all four sectors that emit greenhouse gases. He noted that the group has said that the discussion/exploration of targets should be informed by analysis of strategies that will show what realistically this region can attain and what are the viable, realistic actions that the region can take.

Mr. Herling suggested that the working group look into the possibility of using public access cable stations as a part of education and outreach.

Mr. Griffiths said that the educational strategy being explored by the working group would cover education for both the energy and transportation sectors.

11. Status Report on the Development of a Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects

Mr. Griffiths said that it will take more time to develop the regional list of unfunded projects and that staff plans to work with the TPB Steering Committee to set expectations for the project going forward.

OTHER ITEMS

12. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Board.

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.