

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee July 21, 2010 Maureen Budetti, CAC Chair

On July 15, the Chairman and a Vice Chairman of the WMATA Riders Advisory Council (RAC) spoke to the CAC. They described the Council's structure and work, and discussed ways in which the two committees could interact, including the potential for joint effort related to the WMATA Governance Review Task force. The CAC was also briefed on updates to the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The CAC discussed follow-up activities to the May 26 Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities with special consideration of the TPB staff proposal for next steps.

Discussion with Frank DeBarnardo, Chairman, and David Alpert, Vice Chairman (DC) of the WMATA Riders Advisory Council (RAC)

Mr. DeBarnardo described the structure and activities (most recently a review of the Metro budget) of the RAC, noting some areas of shared interests with the CAC. He said that although the RAC had not thus far focused on issues of mid- and long-range capacity challenges and funding sustainability, he thought that it may be taking up such issues in the near future and would be interested in possible interaction with the CAC.

Mr. Alpert reiterated a desire to facilitate interaction between the two committees, and also specifically invited CAC involvement in the RAC's efforts related to the WMATA Governance Review Task Force. He explained that the task force had been formed by the Greater Washington Board of Trade with cooperation from COG, and that the RAC is concerned about a lack of representation and participation for transit riders on the task force and in the overall review process. He said that some members of the RAC worry that the agenda and interests of the task force's members may not be clear and could be in conflict with the best interests of riders. Alpert noted, for example, that the Board of Trade actively promotes rail extensions to airports, which may not be the most cost-effective improvements for the majority of transit riders. He added that a subcommittee of the RAC would be meeting in two weeks to discuss possible positions and actions the RAC might take regarding the task force.

In the discussion following the two presentations, CAC members asked how RAC members are chosen, what became of previous transit rider advocacy groups, what the relationship between the RAC and the WMATA Board and staff is like, and on what topics the RAC focuses its efforts. There was some discussion of the RAC's position on recent and future fare increases. Mr. DeBarnardo stated that the RAC opposed both fare increases and service cuts, but viewed fare increases as the lesser of two evils and was adamant in its opposition to any service cuts. Mr. Alpert pointed out that the RAC hopes

to explore further Metro funding sources to limit fare increases. Both described the relationship with the Metro Board and staff as generally positive, but noted that some requests by the RAC for information have gone unfulfilled. One CAC member suggested that the RAC could involve itself in efforts to help improve transit rider behavior in ways that would improve the system's efficiency.

The discussion then shifted to the question of CAC involvement in the issue of the WMATA Governance Review Task Force. There was general agreement that rider participation on the task force or in reviewing task force reports and recommendations would be highly beneficial. Such participation could identify for elected officials areas of potential political conflict and citizen opposition early in the process before any final recommendations are made. Mr. Alpert said his impression was that there would not be any riders' advocates added to the task force at this stage, but that the RAC and CAC could still advocate for an opportunity to provide input and review task force products, and encourage task force sponsors to consider citizen input and participation in similar situations in the future.

CAC members generally agreed with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Alpert, but had reservations about taking action without an opportunity for further discussion. Mr. Alpert suggested that some interested members of the CAC could participate in meetings and discussions of the RAC subcommittee for the issue, and return to the CAC with information about any consensus reached. At that point the CAC could decide if it wished to support any joint action or communication. The CAC was receptive to this idea.

In later discussion, CAC members Slater, McCoy, Wheeler, Kaplan, and Foster volunteered to participate in the RAC subcommittee discussions of potential action or communication with the task force, WMATA, COG, and/or the TPB regarding the task force's composition and activities. They also agreed to report back to the CAC in August on these discussions by email or conference call to give the Committee an opportunity to take timely action before the next CAC meeting in September.

Discussion Regarding Next Steps Emerging from the May 26 Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities

John Swanson and Ron Kirby of TPB staff summarized for the Committee a memorandum to the TPB with staff recommendations for the Board on follow-up activities to the May 26 event, including replies to the five items requested by the CAC at the June 16 TPB meeting:

- Form a task force to determine if a regional transportation priorities plan is feasible.
- Develop an inventory of unfunded transportation priority projects.
- Investigate what other MPOs are doing.
- Take steps to increase public information about TPB procedures and goals.
- Continue the conversation [about the regional transportation planning process].

Mr. Kirby said that TPB staff would proceed with the last four of the five items, with reports to the TPB in October and an event in November designed as a follow-up to the Conversation. He said regarding formation of a task force, the staff recommendation was to wait until after completion of the COG application for a HUD sustainability grant, as it was unclear at this point how that effort would relate to the CAC's call for development of a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

Some CAC members were pleased with the speed of the staff response and the plans to move forward with the latter four items. They were excited about the comprehensive, multi-sector approach being taken for the HUD sustainability grant application. Other members expressed dissatisfaction with the recommendation to delay consideration of forming a TPB task force to determine the feasibility and desirability of developing a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, particularly since it did not seem as if the HUD sustainability proposal included development of such a plan or possibilities for changing the region's transportation planning process.

A suggestion was made to pose the question of forming a task force directly to the TPB at its July 21 TPB meeting, even if the result was simply a few interested TPB members who could engage in discussion with CAC members in the coming months. There was agreement that the question should be directly posed to the Board in the near future, but that it made sense to wait until the September TPB meeting to do so.

The CAC approved a motion to request that an item be placed on the September TPB agenda to allow for continued discussion of follow-up activities to the May 26 Conversation, and specifically the question of forming a task force to determine the feasibility and desirability of developing a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

Briefing on the Update to the Region's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Michael Farrell of TPB staff gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the TPB's bicycle and pedestrian activities and explained the process for developing and updating the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. He noted that the plan contains 410 projects, many of which have not reached the design stage, and that as such the cost estimates are broad approximations. He described some examples of recently completed bicycle and pedestrian projects that have been in the Plan in the past. He also discussed the evolving regional context for bicycle and pedestrian projects, including a focus on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation in the Region Forward report that stemmed from the Greater Washington 2050 initiative, and changing federal, state, and WMATA policies on such accommodation. Finally, he summarized the timeline for TPB consideration and approval of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and follow-up actions to be taken by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee in the coming months.

In the interest of time, Chair Budetti asked that CAC members direct any questions or comments on the presentation to Mr. Farrell following the meeting.

Other CAC Business

- The Committee welcomed new member Kelby Funn of Prince George's County, who replaced a Maryland member who resigned from the Committee.
- The Committee elected Tina Slater and Zach Dobelbower to be CAC Vice Chairs for Maryland and D.C., respectively.
- Mr. Kirby provided an overview of items on the June 16 TPB Agenda. The Committee briefly discussed items included in the Letters Packet for the TPB regarding the I-95/395 HOT Lanes project in Virginia. Mr. Kirby said that the letter from NVTC was the latest piece of correspondence between the organization and Arlington County, and that this most recent letter concurred with the County in its desire to get additional information from VDOT and the HOT Lanes Consortium about the impacts of the project.

ATTENDANCE CAC Meeting, July 15, 2010

Members in Attendance

1. Maureen Budetti, VA, Chair
2. Zach Dobelbower, DC
3. William Easter, MD
4. Harold Foster, DC
5. Kelby Funn, MD
6. Farrell Keough, MD
7. Jim Larsen, VA
8. Larry Martin, DC
9. Stephen McCoy, DC
10. Madeline McDuffy, VA
11. Allen Muchnick, VA
12. Gail Parker, VA
13. Tina Slater, MD
14. Emmet Tydings, MD
15. Faith Wheeler, DC

Alternates in Attendance

1. Kim Kaplan, VA
2. Kevin Posey, VA
3. Frederick Walker, VA

Members Not in Attendance

None

Staff/Others

Ron Kirby, COG/TPB
John Swanson, COG/TPB
Darren Smith, COG/TPB
Deborah Bilek, COG/TPB
Michael Farrell, COG/TPB
Frank DeBernardo, Chairman
WMATA Riders Advisory Council
David Alpert, Vice Chairman
WMATA Riders Advisory Council
John Pasek, WMATA
David Kaplan
Bill Orleans