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INTRODUCTION: A LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This document presents the constrained long-range transportation plan (CLRP) for the Washington region through the year 2030. The plan and the process by which it was developed reflect federal planning regulations. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) first established the requirement that metropolitan long-range transportation plans must be financially constrained, among other things. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which was enacted in 1998, upheld and streamlined many of the provisions of ISTEA. Federal planning regulations have not been promulgated for TEA-21. To comply with federal regulations, the plan includes only those projects that the region can actually afford to build and operate during the 2004-2030 time frame, once the costs of maintaining the current transportation system have been considered. For this reason, the plan is termed a "financially constrained" long-range plan.

There are unfunded needs for both highway and transit systems that are not included in any of the results shown, because the plan is "constrained" financially to show what can reasonably be expected to be funded in the period through 2030. Expenditures have generally been constrained to match available revenues, even though both highway and transit agencies have substantial and fundamental rehabilitation and expansion needs that cannot be funded with revenues currently expected to be available.

The plan addresses a number of other federal requirements, including meeting national air quality standards, contributing to annual emissions reductions, and considering the relationship between land use and transportation. Extensive opportunities for interested citizens and organizations to participate in each stage of the plan's development were provided.

This introductory chapter highlights how the long-range plan was developed, how it relates to past and ongoing planning efforts, and how it addresses the major federal planning requirements.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

This plan has been prepared by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington metropolitan area. The TPB is made up of representatives of 20 local governments, the departments of transportation of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, the state legislatures, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Member jurisdictions are shown in Figure 1-1.

The TPB meets monthly and receives staff support from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). The TPB advises the COG Board of Directors on transportation matters that affect the region. In addition to preparing long-range transportation plans, the TPB is responsible for developing the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a federally required budgetary and programming document that shows how specific projects in the CLRP will be implemented during a six-year period. Federal law mandates a “proactive public involvement process . . . that supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans,” with a formal comment period of at least 30 days for plan amendments.

Figure 1-2 shows the metropolitan planning area for which the TPB is responsible. This area, when expanded to include Charles and Calvert counties in Maryland and Stafford County in Virginia, comprises the Washington, DC-MD-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and is the focus of air quality plans developed for the Washington Region.

There are several ways that citizens can provide input into the long-range planning process. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is the main standing body for providing citizen input into the deliberations of the TPB. The CAC was originally established by the TPB in 1993, partly in response to the citizen involvement requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. According to the TPB’s 1999 public involvement policy, the CAC’s mission statement calls upon the committee to promote public involvement in regional transportation planning and provide independent, region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB. For more information on the CAC, contact TPB staff at (202) 962-3295. Concerned citizens may make a statement during the public comment period at the beginning of each TPB meeting, which is held at 12 noon on the third Wednesday of every month except August. To participate call (202) 962-3315. To provide public comment online, go to <www.mwcog.org/transportation/publiccomment>. It should be noted that the Long-Range plan is updated every three years, and amended almost every year. Citizens are invited to provide public comment on the plan each time the plan is updated or amended. The next major plan update will occur in 2006.

Figure 1-1: TPB Member Jurisdictions



Figure 1-2
 TPB Planning Area, Washington DC-MD-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)/
 Air Quality Planning Area and Surrounding Region



CONTEXT FOR LONG-RANGE PLAN

The Washington region's first long-range transportation plan was prepared in the 1960s, when the region was much smaller. The first plan was an ambitious one, envisioning three ring roads around the central city and an extensive rail transit system linking the suburbs to the downtown core. Through the years, the 1966 plan was pared back, but it continued to serve as the basic blueprint for the region's transportation system. One ring road—the Capital Beltway—was constructed, and the 103-mile Metrorail system is now complete. The set of projects that remained in the plan as of 2000—the most recent update—was comparatively modest.

Since that first plan was developed the Washington area has grown dramatically, becoming the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States¹. The population since the 1960s has more than doubled. The number of jobs has surged as well, particularly in suburban areas, and travel on the region's roads has skyrocketed. Recognizing these changes, local and state officials, business and community leaders, members of environmental and civic groups, and many concerned citizens prepared comprehensive reports calling for a new "vision" to shape the region's development.² Within the framework of these reports, the TPB began development of a regional transportation Vision in 1995. In 1998, the TPB unanimously adopted its long-range transportation Vision, which is the transportation policy framework intended to guide regional transportation investments into the new century. It contains eight goals and associated objectives and strategies that will help the region reach those goals. The TPB Vision incorporates all of the "planning factors" specified in federal law and regulations.

Policy Goals

In developing the long-range plan, the TPB was guided by the TPB Vision policy goals and objectives. The entire TPB Vision is presented in Chapter 2. The eight broad goals are presented in Table 1-1.

¹ The Washington-Baltimore Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) is ranked the fourth largest metropolitan area in terms of population. Census 2000 PHC-T-3. Ranking Tables for Metropolitan Areas: 1990 and 2000. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, April 2, 2001.

² MWCOG/Task Force on Growth and Transportation, *A Legacy of Excellence for the Washington Region*, June 1991. See also: Adams, Bruce, et.al., *The Report of the Partnership for Regional Excellence*, presented to MWCOG, July 1993.

**Table 1-1
The TPB Vision Policy Goals**

1. The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will provide **reasonable access at reasonable cost** to everyone in the region.
2. The Washington metropolitan region will develop, implement, and maintain an interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy throughout the entire region, including a **healthy regional core and dynamic regional activity centers** with a mix of jobs, housing, services and recreation in a walkable environment.
3. The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will give priority to **management, performance, maintenance, and safety of all modes and facilities**.
4. The Washington metropolitan region will use the **best available technology** to maximize system effectiveness.
5. The Washington metropolitan region will plan and develop a transportation system that enhances and protects the region's **natural environmental quality, cultural and historic resources, and communities**.
6. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve better inter-jurisdictional **coordination of transportation and land use planning**.
7. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve **enhanced funding mechanisms** for regional and local transportation system priorities that cannot be implemented with current and forecasted federal, state, and local funding.
8. The Washington metropolitan region will support options for **international and inter-regional travel and commerce**.

To develop the plan, each local, state, or regional agency with the authority to construct projects or implement policies submitted to the TPB a set of proposed capital improvements and strategies that, in its view, would best meet one or more of the TPB Vision Policy Goals while remaining within projected revenues. The implementing agencies were asked to describe each proposed project and strategy, as well as its purpose and anticipated contribution to the TPB Vision. Due to their number, these descriptive statements are presented in other volumes. Chapter 5 assesses the anticipated effects of the plan on each of the eight TPB Vision Policy Goals, and documents that each of the required planning factors has been considered.

Project Review and Selection Process

The development of this long-range plan was integrated with the preparation of the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for fiscal years 2004 to 2009. Those projects included in the previous TIP (2003-2008), for which funds had already been committed, were considered a starting point for both the CLRP and the 2004-2009 TIP. Additional

projects proposed by implementing agencies and local governments were then reviewed for inclusion in the plan. The review process focused on each project's contribution to the TPB Vision and federal regulations—in particular, the likely effects on air quality—and the availability of projected revenues to implement each project. The final plan, which is described in Chapter 4 of this report, includes many projects that were part of earlier plans and have longstanding funding commitments from the region's state and local governments.

Financial Analysis

To address the requirement that the plan be financially realistic, the TPB hired a consultant to conduct a study in 2003.³ The study projected the revenues that each state would have available for transportation through the year 2030 and compared the projected revenues to the estimated costs of maintaining and operating the current transportation system together with the expected costs of implementing the long-range plan. The total expenditures over the 25 years of the plan are equal to the total expected revenues or \$93.3 billion. Overall, almost \$72 billion or **77 percent of the total expenditures is for operations and preservation of the region's transportation system**. About \$22 billion, or 23 percent is for expanding the transportation system. Transit expenditures are \$56 billion or 60 percent of the total and highway expenditures are \$37 billion or 40 percent. As mentioned earlier, expenditures have been constrained to match available revenues, even though both highway and transit agencies have substantial and fundamental rehabilitation and expansion needs that cannot be funded with revenues currently expected to be available.

Air Quality Assessment

As required by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), the long-range plan was evaluated for its likely effects on the region's air quality. The proposed facilities and policies in the plan were analyzed with a set of forecasting models maintained by COG. The analysis examined the levels of pollutant emissions from motor vehicles that are projected to occur at specific points in time as the plan is implemented. The air quality analysis shows that the CLRP is in conformity with the requirements of the CAAA. These requirements are discussed in Chapter 2; the plan's impacts on the region's air quality are fully described in a technical report.⁴

Public Involvement

During the preparation of this plan, numerous opportunities were provided for public participation. As required by federal regulations, the TPB has developed a formal policy on public involvement⁵. All changes to the plan have followed this public involvement policy, including 30-day public notice and comment periods for all changes, public comment opportunities at all TPB meetings, and public involvement opportunities at technical

³ Cambridge Systematics, Inc., Analysis of Resources for the Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan for the Washington Area, prepared for MWCOG/TPB, October 2003.

⁴ Air Quality Conformity Determination of the 2003 Constrained Long-Range Plan and the FY2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program for the Washington Metropolitan Region. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, December 31, 2003.

⁵ The public involvement policy is on-line at <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/>.

subcommittees of the TPB. The TPB has established two citizen advisory committees to ensure adequate public participation in the planning process. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is the main standing body for providing citizen input into the deliberations of the Transportation Planning Board. The Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee specifically provides advice to the TPB on how to involve the concerns of low-income and minority communities and disabled persons in the regional transportation planning process. Both the CAC and the AFA reviewed and commented on the 2003 CLRP. More information on public involvement in the 2003 CLRP is described in Chapter 2.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

This chapter has introduced the long-range plan, described how it meets federal planning requirements, and placed it in the context of the TPB Vision. Chapter 2 documents the process used to develop this plan. Chapter 3 provides an overview of transportation facts, trends, and issues in the Washington region. The plan itself is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is an assessment of the plan in light of the TPB's Vision goals and objectives. Chapter 6 presents summaries of the public comments received on the plan, along with responses. Appendix A includes the TPB resolution adopting the 2003 CLRP and Appendix B presents information on the spatial distribution of low-income communities, minority communities and disabled persons and input on the plan from these groups.

Several types of additional information incorporated by reference in this plan can be found in separate volumes. These include the assessment of the plan's effects on regional air quality, entitled "Air Quality Conformity Determination of the 2003 Constrained Long-Range Plan and the FY2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program for the Washington Metropolitan Region" dated December 31, 2003, and hundreds of detailed project description forms that are bound separately in *Inputs for the FY2004 – 2009 Transportation Improvement Program and the 2003 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP)*. One document includes project descriptions submitted by the District of Columbia and Federal Lands Highway Division, one the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), another document includes Suburban Maryland and a fourth contains project descriptions for Northern Virginia. All of these documents are available from the COG Information Center; call (202) 962-3200 for more information.