

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Notes

FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: January 6, 2011

TIME: 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Room 4&5

CHAIR: Victor Weissberg, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Prince George's County

ATTENDANCE:

Randy Carroll, Maryland Department of Environment
Rick Crawford, Norfolk Southern
Eulois Cleckley, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Edward Cohen, Transit Riders Action Coalition
Ed Daniel, Montgomery County Police Department
Ronald s. Flowers, Greater Washington Region Clean Cities
David Goldblatt, Arnold & Potter LLP (Representing CSX)
Mike Heslin, 360jmg LLC (Representing CSX)
Nicole Katsikides, Maryland Department of Transportation
Sandra Jackson, Federal Highway Authority
Terry Levinson, Argonne National Laboratory
Donald Ludlow, Cambridge Systematics
Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County
Valerie Pardo, Virginia Department of Transportation
Jon Schermann, Cambridge Systematics
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County

CALL-IN ATTENDANCE:

John Thomas, Frederick County
Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Railway Express

MWCOG STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Karin Foster, MWCOG
Ron Kirby, MWCOG
Andrew Meese, MWCOG

Victor Weissberg, Freight Subcommittee Chairman—

Mr. Weissberg welcomed attendees and asked for introductions. Following introductions, Mr. Weissberg invited our first speaker, Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning for the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), to present on the Regional Priorities Scoping Process.

Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning for the National Capital Regional TPB, Briefing on the Regional Priorities Scoping Process

Mr. Ron Kirby opened with a discussion of the Vision, adopted by the National Capital Region TPB on October 21, 1998. Mr. Kirby highlighted areas of the Vision that are in synch with the broad goals of the Freight Subcommittee. For example:

Policy Goal 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 and services in a walkable environment.

Objective 3: A web of multi-modal transportation connections which provide convenient access (including improved mobility with reduced reliance on the automobile) between the regional core and regional activity centers, reinforcing existing transportation connections and creating new connections where appropriate.

Policy Goal 8: The Washington metropolitan region will support options for international and inter-regional travel and commerce.

Objective 1: The Washington region will be among the most accessible in the national for international and interregional passenger and goods movements.

Objective 2: Continued growth in passenger and goods movement between the Washington region and other nearby region in the mid-Atlantic area.

Objective 3: Connectivity to and between Washington Dulles International, National, and Baltimore Washington Internal airports.

Strategies 1: Maintain convenient access to all of the region's major airports for people and goods.

Strategies 2: Support efficient, fast, cost-effective operation of inter-regional passenger and freight rail services.

Strategies 3: Support the development of a seamless regional transportation system.

Strategies 5: Develop a regional plan for freight movement.

Mr. Kirby explained that the Technical Committee has several Subcommittees such as the Freight Subcommittee or the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.

Mr. Kirby provided a handout titled "'Strawman' Outline for Regional Priorities Plan Document." A broad summary of the outline is provided below:

- I. Current Regional Planning Activities
- II. Major Regional Challenges
- III. Identifying Regional Priorities for the Future
- IV. A Regional Priorities Plan

As the Regional Priorities Plan Document is being put together, information will be pulled from various planning efforts that have already been done for the TPB, such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Freight Plan. The concept is to ultimately identify a

list of priority projects the TPB should “get behind.” And Mr. Kirby stressed that he would like to see the Freight Subcommittee represented in this process via a list of Freight Priority Projects.

Questions and Comments:

In response to a comment Mr. Kirby made referencing the dominance of through freight movement in the region, Rick Crawford, Vice President of Government Relations, of Norfolk Southern noted that many of their trains terminate in Alexandria and locations in the Washington metropolitan region. These trains contain goods such as coal, paper, ethanol, agriculture products, construction materials, or even goods that may ultimately end up in our homes, such as canned goods and potatoes.

Christine Hoeffner, Manager of Planning, at Virginia Railway Express (VRE), commented on the two Norfolk Southern projects. She noted that no VRE study has confirmed that these projects are beneficial to VRE and therefore it would be premature for Norfolk Southern to suggest that they are needed to support VRE operations.

Mr. Crawford added that Norfolk Southern does anticipate growth in freight trains into the region. Powell is the junction south of Manassas passenger station where Norfolk Southern’s main line from Atlanta connects with the B-Line to Front Royal, and the northeast. With the growth of intermodal service and the potential for added commuter trains as in recent years, two sets of additional main lines are necessary at Powell to avoid gridlock in the future. These improvements would keep the major junction at Manassas fluid.

Victor Weissberg, Freight Subcommittee Chair and Karin Foster, TPB Freight Subcommittee Staff, Top 10 Highlighted Freight Project Discussion —

Chairman Weissberg opened the discussion on the top ten Draft list of freight projects. He noted that this is the first time that the Freight Subcommittee is working to develop such a list and it is expected to be a complex process. He asked Karin Foster to describe how the list was drafted.

Ms. Foster described that initially a straw man of the Draft Freight Project Priority List was put together. Projects were placeholder suggestions taken from the Freight Project Database and Freight Subcommittee suggestions. The Freight Project Database aims to compile all freight-related projects and needs in the National Capital Region from existing plans and documents (e.g. *Constrained Long Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan, Maryland Statewide Freight Plan, and Virginia Statewide Multimodal Freight Report, National Gateway, Crescent Corridor*) or project suggestions from Freight Subcommittee members. Ms. Foster distributed the list at previous meetings and via e-mail. Ms. Foster followed up with the states, the District of Columbia, and railroads for feedback on list. Through this process some projects were replaced and some remained the same from the original strawman. This meeting provided another opportunity for stakeholder discussions on the projects.

Questions and Comments:

Nicole Katsikides, Director of the Office of Freight Management, at Maryland Department of Transportation discussed how the Maryland Statewide Freight Plan

projects were needs and not projects, and therefore, she did not feel comfortable with these needs on the list as top priority projects. She also suggested that highway projects reflect priority freight corridors in the region. Mr. Katsikides expressed a desire to see each project work with each other to reflect a coherent package.

Ed Cohen commented on how large transportation projects often are delayed and delayed because of political desires.

Eulois Cleckley, Director of Motor Carrier Management, for the District Department of Transportation asked if the list could include infrastructure projects as well as operations/management projects. Mr. Cleckley gave the example of the curbside loading zone initiative underway. Ms. Foster noted that the priority list was open to infrastructure and operational projects.

Ms. Foster noted two approaches being discussed to reexamine the current list of projects. One was to examine regional corridors and one was to examine individual projects. Ms. Foster expressed concern with presenting the rail corridors to the TPB without the individual projects also being mentioned.

Andy Meese, Director of System Management Planning, for the Department of Transportation under the TPB suggested that the Freight Subcommittee reexamine the list of projects to develop both long-term corridor projects and individual shorter-term projects for both rail and highway. There was wide agreement on this approach.

The Freight Subcommittee agreed to meet again on February 3, 2011 to discuss an updated Freight Priority List with long-term regionally significant projects on rail and highway corridors and shorter-term projects beneficial to freight.

Karin Foster, Freight Forum Announcement —

Ms. Foster distributed a handout with information about the upcoming Freight Forum. On April 27, 2011, *Freight: Identifying Regional Freight Transportation Priorities* will take place. The Forum will focus on raising awareness of freight issues the in the National Capital Region and to have a discussion with panel members and attendees on Regional Freight Priorities. The Transportation Planning Board and regional freight stakeholders will be invited.

Next Meeting February 3, 2011