

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**

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**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**

May 20, 2009

(as amended on June 17, 2009)

Members and Alternates Present

Monica Backmon, Prince William County
Nat Bottigheimer, WMATA
Dan Drummond, City of Fairfax
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County, DOT
Lyn Erickson, MDOT
Brian A. Glenn, FTA
Jason Groth, Charles County
Don Halligan, MDOT
Tom Harrington, WMATA
Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Charles Jenkins, Frederick County
John D. Jenkins, Prince William County
Julia Koster, NCPC
Timothy Lovain, Alexandria City Council
Michael C. May, Prince William County
Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Suhas Naddoni, City of Manassas Park
Mark Rawlings, DDOT
Rodney Roberts, City of Greenbelt
Rick Rybeck, DDOT
C. Paul Smith, City of Frederick
Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
David Snyder, City of Falls Church
JoAnne Sorenson, VDOT
Patsy Ticer, Virginia Senate
Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning
Todd Turner, City of Bowie

Margaret Vanderhye, Virginia House of Delegates
Lori Waters, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Jonathan Way, City of Manassas
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County
Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park
Christopher Zimmerman, Arlington County

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Ron Kirby
Michael Clifford
Gerald Miller
Robert Griffiths
Nicholas Ramfos
Debbie Leigh
Deborah Etheridge
Andrew Austin
Rex Hodgson
Tim Canan
Daivamani Sivasailam
Dusan Vuksan
Mark Moran
Michael Farrell
Michael Eichler
Monica Bansal
Feng Xie
Yu Gao
Dave Robertson COG/EO
Lee Ruck COG/LEG
Paul DesJardin COG/DCPS
Bill Orleans PG ACT
Betsy Massie PRTC
Kiman Choi Maryland Department of Planning
Jim Maslanka City of Alexandria
Alex Verzosa City of Fairfax
Tom Biesiadny Fairfax County DOT
Greg McFarland NVTC
Harry Sanders Purple Line NOW
Randy Carroll MDE
David Awbrey VDRPT
Joseph Madison MTA
Tom Autrey MNCPPC-Montgomery County
Aaron Overman DDOT

Pam Browning	Save the Trail Petition
Jennifer Green	WMATA
Ryan Bowers	Skycomp, Inc.
Veda Charrow	Self-Chevy Chase
Dan Malouff	Arlington County DOT
Matthew Moskitis	NVTA
Scott Tsikerdauos	State Senator Richard Maldeno
Mike Flood	MTA Consultant
Art Smith	Loudoun County
James W. Clarke	Action Committee for Transit
Mike Madden	MTA
Joyce Sperling	Save the Trail Organization
Mike Hackett	MWAA
Tomika R. Hughey	DDOT- Mass Transit Administration

1. Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities

Ms. Patricia Burda of the Town Council of Chevy Chase commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda – Notice of Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the Purple Line Light Rail Project in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. She said that other alternatives to the preferred Purple Line light rail alignment should be considered, in order to protect the character of the Capital Crescent Trail including the dense tree canopy. She said that the Jones Bridge Road bus rapid transit alternative was not given fair consideration because it was not properly optimized in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Written copies of her remarks were distributed.

Mr. David Lublin of the Town Council of Chevy Chase commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. He said that the TPB should not yet be incorporating the Purple Line in the region’s Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) because MDOT has not yet chosen its preferred alternative. He said that a bus rapid transit alternative is superior to light rail in terms of ridership, environmental impact, and compatibility with other regional initiatives. Written copies of his remarks were distributed.

Mr. Harry Sanders of the advocacy organization Purple Line Now! commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda , and said that he was encouraged that the project was finally moving forward in the TPB process. He said that the Purple Line would be a true regional asset due to its connection to other transit facilities, economic stimulus, and bridging of eastern and western sides of the region. He asked the TPB to approve the project’s inclusion in the regional air quality conformity analysis and encouraged the Board to help build public support for the project and increase the federal commitment to transit funding. Written materials relating to his remarks were distributed.

Mr. Jim Clarke of the advocacy group Action Committee for Transit (ACT) commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. He said that his group had been promoting the Purple Line concept for 23 years and urges the TPB to support moving the project forward. He said that the project has broad support among local governments and civic organizations, and described the potential benefits of the project in providing alternatives to driving. Written copies of his remarks were distributed.

Ms. Karren Pope-Onwukwe of the advocacy group Prince George's Advocates for Community-Based Transit commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that her group supports the Purple Line project, and encouraged the Board to look not just at basic ridership projections but also at the expected benefits in mobility, congestion management, and economic development. She said that the project will particularly benefit low-income working people who are traditionally underrepresented in public comment on transportation projects.

Mr. Caleb Crisberg of the Montgomery County Park and Planning Volunteer Purple Line Advisory Group commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. He said that as someone who is both reliant on public transportation and a user of the Capital Crescent Trail, he questioned the information provided by the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) on the impact of the proposed light rail line on the trail. He encouraged the involvement of outside transit experts in the planning process, in particular to look at alternatives to overhead wires for stretches of the proposed line.

Ms. Aileen Worthington, a District of Columbia resident, commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that as an avid user of the Capital Crescent Trail, she questioned the logic of negatively impacting this facility while other cities around the country are working to create, protect, and enhance trail corridors. She said that after construction of the light rail line, the trail would lose its appeal to all but the serious commuter cyclists, as it would become an unpleasant experience for families and other recreational users. She encouraged consideration of other options that would not adversely impact the trail.

Ms. Veda Charro of the Montgomery County Park and Planning Volunteer Purple Line Advisory Group commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that she thinks streetcars are appropriate for urban settings, but not in residential areas and natural areas such as the Capital Crescent Trail corridor. She said that putting bus rapid transit on Jones Bridge Road would satisfy the need to connect the ends of Metro's Red Line without negatively impacting the trail corridor.

Ms. Tina Slater of the advocacy group Silver Spring Advocates commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that her group supports the Purple Line as proposed, and that as traffic and congestion get worse the region desperately needs better east-west connections, especially with transit. She said her experience living in a Philadelphia suburb indicates that people will pay a premium to live near a light rail line, and that the facility will encourage alternatives to driving.

Ms. Yvonne Finnegan, a resident of Kensington, Maryland, commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that using the Capital Crescent Trail in its current condition is a rejuvenating natural experience for thousands of trail users, and is the site of unique and valuable social interaction. She said that while transit could be implemented elsewhere, the trail is an asset that could not easily be replicated. She asked the TPB to oppose the Purple Line proposal.

Mr. Matt Sullivan, a resident of Kensington, Maryland, commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. He said that the proposed Purple Line should not be implemented because ridership projections indicate that it will not have that significant of an impact on traffic congestion in the region. He said that the proposed route would not serve expected redevelopment north of Bethesda, and ultimately falls short in the goal of connecting to Tysons Corner and BWI airport. He said a better solution would be an underground heavy rail line, and suggested capturing the value of development rights as a source of funding. Written copies of his remarks were distributed.

Ms. Pam Browning of the advocacy group Save The Trail commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She presented a petition opposing construction of the Purple Line adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail, and said it contained more than 17,000 signatures. She said that alternatives such as bus rapid transit on existing road corridors or underground heavy rail would be preferable, and would avoid the negative impacts on the trail such as loss of the tree canopy. Written copies of her remarks and related materials were distributed.

Ms. Bev Denbo of the advocacy group Greater Bethesda/Chevy Chase Coalition commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that her group has advocated for and supported the trail for more than 20 years, and she told about how the trail came to be created. She said that the proposed Purple Line would destroy the trail. Written copies of her remarks were distributed.

Ms. Rebecca Perring of the advocacy group Coalition for Smarter Growth commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She said that the group strongly supports the proposed Purple Line and urged the TPB to move forward with fully incorporating the project into the CLRP. She said that light rail would be the most effective alternative in terms of travel time, energy consumption, emissions, and reduction of traffic congestion, and that its permanence would best encourage economic development. She asked the TPB to make the project a regional priority moving forward.

Ms. Bonnie Naradzay, a resident of Silver Spring, commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. She asked TPB members to be sure to experience using the trail before making a decision on the proposed Purple Line. She said that trail connections should be an important part of regional transportation planning, and that the trail is a valuable piece of greenspace that should be protected.

Mr. Scott Sicerdonis, a staff person for Maryland State Senator Richard Madaleno, read a prepared statement on behalf of Senator Madaleno regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. The

statement indicated Senator Madaleno's opposition to the proposed Purple Line light rail alignment because he believes it will not be cost-effective in reducing traffic congestion and will have negative impacts on the Capital Crescent Trail.

Mr. Christopher Maines, a resident of Silver Spring, commented regarding Item 12 of the TPB agenda. He said that as a frequent user of the Capital Crescent trail, he is continually amazed at the level of use of the trail, and values the sense of community and health benefits of the trail. He said that he does not see how the light rail line can coexist with the trail without severe negative impacts on the trail. Written copies of his remarks were distributed.

Mr. Matthew Moskitis of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance commented regarding Item 9 of the TPB agenda, the briefing on 2008 peak period freeway congestion in the Washington Region. He noted that while congestion may have decreased, the assumed reasons for the decrease – higher energy costs and higher unemployment – are not desirable. He said that because a large majority of trips in the region are made by car, and congestion remains a significant problem that is only expected to worsen, the region needs to invest in road projects such as expansion of I-66 and additional crossings of the Potomac River. He said that inadequate investment in transportation infrastructure risks making the region less attractive to industries and employers. Written copies of his remarks were distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 15 Meeting

Ms. Smyth moved to approve the minutes of the April 15 TPB meeting and Mr. Zimmerman seconded the motion.

Mr. Zimmerman asked for a correction to be made to an apparent typo in the second paragraph of page 11 of the minutes, to change the phrase "If this program is doing . . ." to "If this program is going to be done . . .".

Mr. Turner asked for a correction to be made to the sixth paragraph of page 6 of the minutes, to refer to Council Member Tony Knotts as being from Prince George's County as opposed to Montgomery County.

Chairman Jenkins accepted both corrections to the minutes, which were approved unanimously as amended.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Mr. Erenrich said that the Technical Committee met on May 1, and reviewed six items included on the May 20 TPB agenda. These included:

- Item 7: The Committee was briefed on the proposed amendments to the FY 2009-2014

TIP related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Technical Committee recommends that the TPB approve these amendments.

- Item 10: The Committee heard a briefing on additional findings from the 2007/2008 Regional Household Travel Survey
- Item 11: Staff updated the Committee on activities of the Scenario Study Task Force, including development of a regional priority bus transit project and planning for a Priority Bus Transit Conference on June 24.
- Items 12-14: The Committee was briefed on the notice items dealing with proposed amendments regarding the Purple Line light rail project and the I-395 reconfiguration and air rights development plan.

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Keogh said that the last meeting of the CAC was held on May 14 in Frederick, Maryland, as part of CAC efforts to reach out to the region's outer jurisdictions. He noted that Chairman Jenkins hosted the meeting. He said that attendance by local residents was high, but that actual CAC attendance was low despite various options for meeting participation, including teleconferencing and live streaming video on the Web. He encouraged TPB members to view the online archive of the meeting.

Mr. Keogh said the meeting focused on three issues: the possibility of a regional bus rapid transit network, including the incorporation of variably priced lanes; federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions that are affecting the region, particularly traffic congestion impacts in Frederick County; and upcoming projects within Frederick County, particularly involving the I-270 corridor. He said that discussion about these issues, especially variably priced lanes, was extensive, and demonstrated a need to get more information to the public about these topics. He said that the meeting also benefited greatly from the presence of guest speakers from Frederick County staff who were able to provide detailed information.

Mr. Keogh concluded his remarks by noting the comments he's received from members of the public following the meeting, many of which outlined the difficulties faced by residents in outer jurisdictions. He said that regional discussions should include consideration of the many people in outer jurisdictions who do not have viable transit options and must drive to work and other destinations, and who often face severe traffic congestion that diminishes their quality of life.

5. Report of the Steering Committee

Mr. Kirby said that the TPB Steering Committee met on May 1, and approved one resolution amending the 2009-2014 TIP with several projects requested by VDOT that are exempt from the air quality conformity analysis requirement. He said that the Steering Committee also reviewed the agenda for the May 20 TPB meeting.

Mr. Kirby summarized the letters sent and received, including a letter from the TPB to Congressmen Moran and Ruppertsberger requesting funding for the MATOC program as a High-Priority Project for the upcoming surface transportation legislation. He said that the letters packet also included a memorandum from Ms. Hudgins on behalf of the TPB Access For All (AFA) Advisory Committee with comments on the CLRP and other transportation issues. He invited Ms. Hudgins to comment on the memorandum.

Ms. Hudgins described the role of the AFA Advisory Committee, and said that the Committee had fewer comments on changes to the CLRP this year, but provided general comments reflecting their concerns about transit service provision and other transportation issues facing the communities they represent. She summarized the Committee's comments, noting particular interest in WMATA's actual and proposed cost-cutting measures, and the impact that fare increases have on disadvantaged communities. She said that the Committee largely praised efforts by WMATA to ease the transition from paper transfers, but encouraged the agency to do more to reach limited-English-speaking persons and find ways to achieve efficiencies in the MetroAccess program without reducing service quality or affordability to passengers. She said she hoped the TPB's work in focusing on priority bus corridors will end up helping those in transit-dependent communities.

Ms. Hudgins said that many of the issues raised by the AFA Advisory Committee about how transit service affects their lives are issues that can be addressed through improvement of transit services overall. She said that for instance, better bus service could reduce the use (and cost) of the MetroAccess service. She said she hoped that the TPB and WMATA can continue to focus on the issues raised in the memorandum.

Mr. Kirby said that the letters packet also included a letter from the WMATA General Manager along with a resolution endorsing the concept of an enhanced regional priority bus network and pledging support for TPB efforts to apply for federal stimulus funding for work to that end. He said that the packet also included letters of support regarding two transportation projects in the District of Columbia to two members of Congress who lead the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He said that the final letter in the TPB mailout packet was from the Zipcar company, expressing interest in the TPB's report on the vehicle fleet and claiming some role in reducing vehicle ownership in the region.

Mr. Kirby noted two additional letters that were handed out at the May 20 meeting, including one from TPB member Mr. Bronrott, who could not be present for the meeting but wanted the Board to be aware of his support for the Purple Line light rail project, and one from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority expressing interest in participating in the regional priority bus planning activities of the TPB.

6. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Jenkins thanked TPB staff for their participation and assistance in holding the CAC outreach meeting in Frederick County, and said the meeting was well received by area residents.

Mr. Kirby expressed his appreciation for the invitation to come to Frederick County for the meeting, and thanked Chairman Jenkins and local staff for hosting the event.

7. Approval of Amendments to the FY 2009-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Include Projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Mr. Kirby noted that there were six separate resolutions under this item, and asked the representatives from the implementing agency for each project to address them in turn and allow the Board to consider them separately.

Ms. Sorenson described the amendment proposed by VDOT, including two projects dealing with portions of the Fairfax County Parkway in the area of the Engineering Proving Grounds. She said that those projects are related to federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) implementation. She said that the third project included in the amendment is to fund a trail at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Heritage Center. She said that the list does not represent all of the projects the VDOT hopes to implement with stimulus package funding, and that the Commonwealth Transportation Board in Virginia will be making decisions on additional projects. She said that at this stage VDOT is focusing on getting projects incorporated into the TIP to meet the requirement that 50 percent of the federal stimulus funds be obligated by June 29, 2009, and will submit additional projects for the TIP at a later date.

Ms. Sorenson moved approval of Resolution R26-2009. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Halligan described the amendment requested by MDOT to add additional funding to projects or categories already in the TIP. He said that the amendment is necessary because the amount of funding to be added is more than 20% of what is currently programmed for each project.

Mr. Halligan moved approval of Resolution R27-2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Erenrich and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Erenrich described the amendment requested by Montgomery County, and said that it represented the county's full allocation of stimulus money for transportation. He said that the money was divided almost equally between highways and transit. He said that some unique elements of the projects include upgrades of traffic signalization using fiber optics, and back-up power supplies for traffic signals for storm events and other outages.

Mr. Erenrich moved approval of Resolution R28-2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Elrich, and was approved unanimously.

Chairman Jenkins passed the gavel to Vice-Chairman Snyder to enable him to make a motion regarding the amendment for Frederick County.

Chairman Jenkins said that the amendment requested by Frederick County included about \$3 million that would go primarily for road resurfacing, bridge painting, spot congestion improvements and safety improvements.

Chairman Jenkins moved approval of Resolution R29-2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith and was approved unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Snyder returned the gavel to Chairman Jenkins.

Mr. Weissberg described the amendment requested by Prince George's County. He said that the amendment included slightly under \$7.4 million allocated for a variety of road resurfacing projects on county and municipally maintained roadways throughout the county.

Mr. Weissberg moved approval of Resolution R30-2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Turner and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Groth described the amendment requested by Charles County as allocating approximately \$475,000 for resurfacing, detector replacement, and pavement marking replacement on roadways in the County.

Mr. Groth moved approval of Resolution R31-2009. The motion was seconded by Mr. Turner and was approved unanimously.

8. Status Report on the Draft 2009 CLRP and the FY 2010-2015 TIP and the Related Air Quality Conformity Assessment

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Kirby said the conformity assessment for the 2009 CLRP update and the FY 2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be released for public comment in June and will be presented to the TPB for final approval in July. He said the conformity assessment is almost completed. He called attention to the emissions calculations for the year 2010, noting that based on the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) analysis presented to the Board last month, the vehicle fleet will be older than anticipated and thus emissions levels will be higher. However, he said that forecast emissions levels will still not exceed the emissions budgets.

Vice Chairman Snyder noted the very positive news from President Obama in the press regarding regulations to accelerate the new CAFE vehicle fleet standards for miles per gallon. He asked if it would make sense for the TPB to send a letter in support of that initiative.

Mr. Kirby said that might be appropriate to discuss at the June meeting.

Vice Chairman Snyder asked if the June meeting would also include a briefing on a proposed federal “cash for clunkers” program.

Mr. Kirby said that topic would also be covered in June.

Mr. Roberts asked if the TPB’s emission calculations included emissions released by manufacturing new cars. He suggested it could be a better strategy to keep vehicles longer and go to alternative fuel vehicles.

Mr. Kirby said that because vehicles are not manufactured in the Washington region, the emissions from their manufacturing is not calculated in the region’s emissions forecasts. He said the big question is how quickly people will buy new vehicle in order to have a more fuel-efficient and less polluting fleet. Alternative fuel vehicles are important but they have to be purchased by more people in order to have a significant impact on emissions.

Regarding alternative fuels, he noted that retrofitting existing heavy-duty vehicles is a very real option because these vehicles get replaced on a relatively slow schedule.

9. Briefing on 2008 Peak Period Freeway Congestion in the Washington Region and Changes Since 2005 and 2002

Referring to the mailout report and handout presentation, Mr. Kirby briefed the Board on the latest aerial survey, which was performed by the firm Skycomp in Spring 2008. He said that Skycomp has been doing the surveys for the TPB every three years since 1993. He introduced Ryan Bowers from Skycomp and suggested that TPB members might want to talk with him after the meeting or possibly arrange a briefing in their individual jurisdictions. He said the survey includes the entire 300-mile freeway system in the region, three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Photographs are taken on multiple days, a minimum of three days in each location, with typical recurring conditions. The key indicator is density of passenger cars per mile, per lane. The consultants use the photographs to calculate these densities. The indicators of density are then turned into levels of service.

Mr. Kirby said the context for this presentation is very important. From 2005 to 2008, vehicle miles of travel fell an estimated 3.1 percent in the Washington metropolitan area, which is similar to the national level. He noted that this decrease was very substantial and was the first

time since 1993 that a drop in VMT has been recorded in comparison with the prior aerial survey. The reduced VMT has led to reductions in congestion.

Mr. Kirby described in detail some of the key measures used in the study, including total lane miles of congestion, main locations of congestion in the region, the top ten congested locations, and corridors with the longest delays.

In summary, he said that overall the 3.1 percent decrease in VMT from 2005 to 2008, and some localized improvements to capacity had led to improvements in conditions. However, despite the overall reduction in traffic there were a number of locations where congestion got worse from 2005 to 2008.

Mr. Zimmerman asked when the survey was conducted.

Mr. Kirby said it was done in the spring of 2008.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that the timing is significant in terms of the rise in gas prices last year. He asked why it takes so long for the data to be released.

Mr. Kirby said it takes a while to sort and analyze the data. He said that TPB staff did not receive the data until February.

Mr. Zimmerman said efforts should be made to see if the time period between the aerial survey and the release of the data could be reduced.

Mr. Zimmerman said the data illustrates a key point about the increasing costs of congestion at the margin, which works in both directions. This means that the total number of people who are driving is not as important as what is happening at the margin; a fairly small shift of drivers out of cars can result in a fairly significant reduction in congestion. He said this point also has implications for the regional priority bus network, which, even if only marginally successful, could improve the traffic situation all throughout the region.

Ms. Waters added that the location of job opportunities closer to where people live is also important, not just alternative transportation opportunities.

10. Briefing on Additional Findings from the 2007/2008 Regional Household Travel Survey

Referring to the handout material, Mr. Griffiths continued his series of briefings on the Regional Household Travel Survey. His presentation focused on major mixed-use and higher density activity centers in the metropolitan region and compared them to other areas within the region to illustrate the effects of mixed-use land use on regional travel behavior and transportation system performance.

Mr. Griffiths highlighted some major preliminary findings from this initial analysis of the activity centers. These findings included that in regional activity centers: households are smaller; there are slightly fewer workers; there are significantly fewer vehicles; and there are two to three times the number of walk trips. Together, walk and transit account for about a third of the daily travel in those centers. These households make about the same number of trips as most households in the region, but they travel a third less miles.

Mr. Bottigheimer asked how many of the region's households are in regional activity centers.

Mr. Griffiths answered 22 percent of households are in activity centers.

Ms. Smyth asked what the sampling size of the survey was.

Mr. Griffiths said that region-wide, the number of completed surveys was 11,500 households. Those responses represented 25,000 people.

Ms. Smyth asked why there was no information about Tysons Corner.

Mr. Griffiths answered that the sample size was not large enough to represent the Tysons Corner activity center because the center was drawn fairly narrowly.

Ms. Waters said analysis shows that families with children are not living in regional activity centers. She said this is an indication of the need to start looking at housing types that are more attractive to families.

Mr. Griffiths agreed.

Ms. Tregoning asked whether staff had done analysis of the activity centers themselves to better understand the difference among them, and what are some of the factors that contribute to varying splits in mode choice.

Mr. Griffiths said that staff would be looking into those kinds of questions in the next few months.

11. Update on the May 20 Scenario Task Force Meeting, the Development of a Regional Priority Bus Transit Project, and the June 24 TPB Conference: Opportunities for Priority Bus Transit in the Washington Region

Ms. Tregoning gave an update on the status of the Scenarios Task Force, which the TPB has charged to work on developing a regional priority bus transit project for submittal to the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding under an AARA competitive grant program known as

the “TIGER” program. She said the USDOT recently released criteria for this grant program. The applications are due on September 15, 2009.

Ms. Tregoning also mentioned that progress is being made on the agenda for the Regional Priority Bus Transit Conference on June 24. She said that she had received a tentative commitment from the Under Secretary for Transportation, Roy Kienitz, to be the keynote luncheon speaker.

Mr. Kirby thanked Ms. Tregoning for securing Mr. Kienitz as speaker. Regarding the grant application, he said the most significant detail emerging from the recently released criteria was the deadline of September 15, which was two months earlier than anticipated. He noted that this deadline would occur before the TPB’s September meeting. Mr. Kirby said that in the discussion during the morning work session, there was agreement about the need to get the key boards, including WMATA, NVRTA and the TPB, to approve the basic structure of the application in July. He said that further consideration needed to be given to the question of whether the TPB would need to go through a final sign-off before the application is submitted in September. He said that one possibility would be to schedule the TPB’s September meeting a week earlier.

Mr. Kirby said that the criteria appear to favor the kind of project the TPB is considering submitting. He said the working group would be meeting every two weeks to hammer out the details.

12. Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP to Include the Purple Line

Referring the mailout material, Mr. Halligan said the Maryland Department of Transportation is requesting an amendment to the 2009 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) to add the Purple Line transit project into the plan and downgrade two highway projects currently slated in the CLRP for construction to “studies.” The two projects are Maryland 28-198 in Montgomery County and Prince George’s County, and Maryland 3 in Prince George’s County and Anne Arundel County. He said that MDOT was requesting that TPB do an out-of-cycle amendment to keep the Purple Line project on schedule. He said that MDOT will be submitting a New Starts application, and FTA has indicated that the project must be in the CLRP before that application can be submitted. He explained the funding package for the Purple Line project. He said that MDOT is requesting that the light rail alternative be modeled for conformity purposes, although he said that an alternative has not yet been selected. He said that public hearings, conducted last November, indicated a tremendous need for the project. He also said that the county councils and county executives of both Montgomery and Prince George’s counties unanimously endorse the light rail alternative, and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commissions in both counties also endorse the light rail alternative.

Chairman Jenkins asked why someone who represents Frederick County would support spending \$1.68 billion for the Purple Line, which he said would have limited benefits, instead of spending that money to expand I-270, which he said would be more beneficial.

Mr. Erenrich noted that the Corridor Cities Transitway is already in the Constrained Long Range Plan, and according to the requirements is fundable within the plan's dollar value. Therefore one project would not be put ahead of another.

Chairman Jenkins said he understood that.

Mr. Halligan added that hearings in mid-June are scheduled for the multimodal I-270 Corridor Cities Transitway and I-270 improvements. He said that both the Corridor Cities Transitway and the Purple line could be proposed for New Starts funding at the same time.

Chairman Jenkins said that would work wonderfully for Montgomery County.

Mr. Roberts said that other alternatives should be found so that the project was not a choice between the trail or light rail.

Mr. Halligan said that it was a misconception that a segment of the trail would be closed.

Mr. Roberts asked if other alternatives under consideration involve not using the trail at all.

Mr. Madden, project manager for the Purple Line, said there is one alternative that would not use a portion of the trail, but instead would put Bus Rapid Transit on Jones Bridge Road. However, he said the project recommended for the CLRP would be on the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, but it would not destroy the Trail. Rather, it would build the Trail alongside of the transitway.

Mr. Roberts said that nonetheless, the option proposed for the CLRP would essentially destroy the parkland along the trail. He said parkland is of premium value.

Mr. Madden said the property is not classified as a park. It is former railroad right-of-way that was purchased in 1988 by Montgomery County.

Mr. Roberts said it functions as a park and should be preserved. He said there were other alternatives to use.

Mr. Halligan said that there are other alternatives, but that MDOT believes the requested alternative best meets the mobility and access needs of the region.

Mr. Roberts said he disputed that assertion.

Mr. Turner said the City Council of Bowie supports the project, even though the Maryland 3 project, which is a priority for the City of Bowie, is being downgraded in the CLRP. He noted that MDOT has indicated to Bowie that the project will be restored in the 2010 CLRP and also hopefully with some consideration for other projects.

Mr. Wojahn said the City Council of College Park also supports the Purple and has expressed support for the light rail alternative. He asked MDOT representatives to briefly address what the advantages of the light rail alternative are.

Mr. Madden said the key advantages include better travel time, higher reduction in auto trips and higher ridership. He said the counties and state have indicated that the project should be able to serve future ridership estimates. He said the BRT alternatives are pushing up against that limit in terms of carrying capacity, while the light rail alternatives have more carrying capacity.

Speaking as a bicyclist, Mr. Wojahn said he supports trails, but said he supported the light rail alternative, in that it will have a higher ridership and will be more effective as a public transit alternative. Therefore it will do a more effective job of taking traffic off of streets and will make bicycling easier overall.

Ms. Waters asked how many miles of the light rail alternative are along the trail.

Mr. Madden said approximately three miles is along the trail. An additional 1.2 miles, along CSX right of way, is not along the trail.

Ms. Waters asked if the trail will continue to exist along the light rail line.

Mr. Halligan said yes and he pointed out that a number of trail and bicycle organizations, including the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, support the project, including the light rail alternative on the Georgetown Branch right-of-way.

Mr. Smith said that a number of comments raised during the public comment period do not appear to have been addressed in the written material provided to the Board. For example, he asked to see documentation indicating that light rail is a better alternative than express bus service.

Mr. Madden said the Alternatives Analysis Draft Environmental Impact Statement, along with 12 or 13 technical reports, provide that information.

Mr. Lovain asked if the analysis had looked at Bombardier and other new streetcars that operate with stored power so that they do not need overhead lines.

Mr. Madden said the Montgomery County Executive and County Council requested a study of such options, as well as diesel electric. However, he said that those streetcars are not yet operational.

Chairman Jenkins noted that he did not see an actionable resolution on this item.

Mr. Kirby said this was a notice item. He said the TPB would be asked for action at the June meeting.

13. Notice of Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP to include the Closure of the I-395 Southbound Exit Ramp to 3rd Street NW, the Reconfiguration of the Southbound Entrance and Northbound Exit Ramps, and the Reconnection of F and G Streets between 2nd and 3rd Streets NW in Conjunction with the “Return to L’Enfant” Planned Unit Development on the I-395 Air Rights between E Street and Massachusetts Avenue NW

Mr. Rybeck said that the District of Columbia was requesting an off-cycle amendment to accommodate a land-use and transportation project that would eliminate the disruption to the urban street grid caused by I-395 in the project area. He referred to a handout distributed at the meeting that showed the existing condition of the area and the proposed changes. He described the transportation components of the required air quality conformity analysis, referring to a diagram showing alterations to ramps and the overlapping street grid. He said that the air rights development above the highway would create both employment and housing opportunities in the area, which is well served by transit.

Mr. Rybeck said that while some concern has been expressed about closure of the ramps, the traffic analysis conducted indicates that they are not heavily used and their closure should not cause major impacts on traffic patterns and congestion.

Ms. Sorenson said that she was disappointed that VDOT had not received a more timely response to its request for the traffic analysis associated with the project, and had only received it the day of the TPB meeting. She said she was particularly concerned about ensuring adequate and timely information sharing between the two jurisdictions regarding the 14th Street Bridge project, which will have impacts in Virginia. She said that VDOT had not been included in planning and discussions for that project. She asked that DDOT include both Virginia and Maryland agencies in their planning and operations, reciprocating DDOT’s insistence on involvement with projects in the adjacent suburbs.

Ms. Waters asked what the distance was to the next southbound I-395 off-ramp following the one proposed for closure at 3rd Street NW.

Mr. Rybeck said that the next southbound exit ramp is in the vicinity of the House of Representatives office buildings at around 3rd or 4th and C Streets SW, on the other side of the tunnel under the National Mall.

Ms. Waters asked if the traffic analysis included data on off-peak usage of the ramps.

Mr. Rybeck said that the analysis included such data, and showed that the ramps are used even less during off-peak periods. He noted that the full traffic analysis has been shared with VDOT and MDOT as of that morning.

14. Notice of Proposed Draft Scope of Work for An Air Quality Conformity Assessment for An Amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP to Include the Projects Described in Items 12 and 13

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Kirby explained that this final item is the scope of work for conducting conformity analysis and amending the 2009 CLRP to include the two projects discussed under Items 12 and 13. He said that with the Board's approval at the June meeting, the two projects will be included in the conformity assessment inputs. He said that land-use changes based on the two projects will be included in a revised version of the Cooperative Forecasts, which will be labeled Round 7.2a. The draft conformity assessment will be presented to the TPB in September and the TPB will be asked to approve the amended CLRP in October.

Mr. Kirby also called attention to the new Region magazine, which includes a look back at the past ten years since the approval of the TPB Vision in 1998.

Mr. Turner said he wanted to publicly acknowledge and thank members of the WMATA board who supported the restoration of proposed cuts in bus services in Prince George's County.

15. Other Business and Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:24 p.m.