

TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ITEM #1



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Technical Committee Minutes

For meeting of
February 5, 2016

**TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES
ATTENDANCE – February 5, 2016**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DDOT Mark Rawlings
DCOP Dan Emerine

MARYLAND

Charles County Ben Yeckley
Frederick County David Whitaker
City of Frederick Timothy Davis
Gaithersburg -----
Montgomery County John Thomas
Prince George's County Anthony Foster
Rockville -----
M-NCPPC
 Montgomery County -----
 Prince George's County -----
MDOT Lyn Erickson
 Kari Snyder
Takoma Park -----

VIRGINIA

Alexandria Pierre Holloman
Arlington County Dan Malouff
City of Fairfax -----
Fairfax County Mike Lake
 Malcolm Watson
Falls Church -----
Fauquier County -----
Loudoun County Robert Brown
Manassas -----
NVTA Sree Nampoothiri
NUTC Dan Goldfarb
Prince William County James Davenport
PRTC Betsy Massie
VRE Sonali Soneji
 Christine Hoeffner
VDOT Norman Whitaker
VDRPT Tim Roseboom
NVPDC -----
VDOA -----

WMATA Allison Davis

FEDERAL/REGIONAL

FHWA-DC -----
FHWA-VA -----
FTA -----
NCPC -----
NPS -----
MWAQC -----
MWAA -----

COG STAFF

Kanti Srikanth, DTP
Robert Griffiths, DTP
Ron Milone, DTP
Andrew Meese, DTP
Nick Ramfos, DTP
Andrew Austin, DTP
Bill Bacon, DTP
Anant Choudhary, DTP
Lamont Cobb, DTP
Michael Farrell, DTP
Ben Hampton, DTP
Charlene Howard, DTP
Nicole McCall, DTP
Jessica Mirr, DTP
Mark Moran, DTP
Dzung Ngo, DTP
Jinchul Park, DTP
Jane Posey, DTP
Wenjing Pu, DTP
Eric Randall, DTP
Sergio Ritacco, DTP
Daivamani Sivasailam, DTP
John Swanson, DTP
Dusan Vuksan, DTP
Sunil Kumar, DEP
Paul DesJardin, DCPS
Sophie Mintier, DCPS

OTHER

Bill Orleans
Alex Brun (MDE)

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
Technical Committee Meeting

Minutes

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from the February 5 Technical Committee Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

2. Briefing on Project Submissions for the 2016 CLRP Amendment

Mr. Austin spoke to the prepared memorandum that included an introduction to the projects, a draft of the project-level RTPP goals and federal Planning Factors analysis, the project profiles, and CLRP project description forms. He asked committee members to review the materials and provide any edits by the end of Tuesday, February 9.

Ms. Posey distributed copies of the Inputs to the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2016 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2017-2022 TIP. She also asked committee members to review and comment by February 9. She also noted that expanded information on transit assumptions to be included in the model were due by March 4.

Mr. Srikanth asked for further information on the VRE Extension to Gainesville/Haymarket. Ms. Sonali stated that an environmental impact study and alternatives analysis were ongoing, but that the basic elements of the project are accurate as described. She indicated that the alternatives analysis would be complete in April, so there may be some new details after that. Mr. Srikanth asked if improvements to the Long Bridge would be included to accommodate the expansion. Ms. Sonali responded that there are currently some constraint issues on the part of CSX, but that those improvements will need to be in place at a future point. Mr. Srikanth inquired about what sources were anticipated to fund the project and if they were reasonably expected to be available. Ms. Sonali stated that VRE anticipated receiving state funds through VDRPT (including Capital Assistance and Rail Enhancement Funds), through NVT A (including RSTP, CMAQ and HB 2313 funds), and that VRE would be applying for federal New Starts funding as well.

Mr. Austin showed the committee an interactive GIS mapping feature that highlighted the major new and changed projects.

Mr. Srikanth asked about a transit component and the funding arrangements for the I-395 Express Lanes project. Mr. Whitaker noted that future updates would include transit elements, but that was currently being studied. Mr. Roseboom stated that a multi-modal study being conducted by VDRPT was expected to be complete in December 2016. Ms. Posey confirmed that there were no transit assumptions included for this project in the proposed inputs for analysis. Mr. Whitaker noted that discussions had taken place with representatives from DDOT about the impacts on the northern end of the project, heading into the District.

Ms. Erickson explained for the record that MDOT typically does not advance new projects into the CLRP until they have significantly completed their NEPA process, and that no new projects met that criteria at this time.

3. Briefing on Draft Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2016 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2017-2022 TIP

Ms. Posey distributed an updated Scope of Work and a letter from MDOT. She explained that the conformity analysis would be very similar to the one done last year. She noted that one update was that the analysis would no longer have to include Winter CO, since the region has reached the end of the maintenance period for that pollutant. She instructed the group to look at the table on page 3, and indicated that the table outlined the process, and that changes since last time were highlighted. She noted that there is a new version of MOVES, MOVES2014a, but indicated that it is only slightly different than MOVES2014. She noted that there will be a new round of cooperative forecasts, Round 9.0. She indicated that this was a significant change since the last forecast. She referenced the MDOT letter, and informed the group that MDOT is making a policy change to the HOV assumptions in the travel demand model. Previously, it was assumed that all HOV/HOT facilities in the region would convert to HOV3+ by 2020. Maryland has decided that this is unlikely, and indicated that Maryland HOV facilities should remain 2+ through the end of the planning period. Ms. Posey listed the analysis years, and noted the inclusion of 2016, pointing out that this is potentially the new ozone attainment year. Ms. Posey discussed the schedule, and reminded the group that the inputs and the scope of work would be released for public comment on 2/11, and that the conformity analysis is scheduled to be completed in November.

Mr. Srikanth asked if it was possible that 2015 would not have to be analyzed, if 2016 was approved as the new attainment year. Ms. Posey indicated that that could happen, but she had not heard any suggestions about the timing of EPA's approval. Mr. Srikanth also noted that there would be a presentation regarding the Round 9.0 Cooperative Forecasts to the TPB in March.

4. Review Draft FY 2017 UPWP

Referring to a presentation and memorandum, Mr. Griffiths reviewed the draft FY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He described what the UPWP is and how it is structured. He described funding sources and amounts. He said the grand total of funding assumed at this time is \$13,343,903. He said that the draft assumes the same level of planning funds as the FY 2016 UPWP because new funding levels provided through the recent federal reauthorization act are not yet known. He noted that given the demands on the core work program, technical assistance funding in the UPWP for the state DOTs and WMATA has been reduced, although some of this funding might be restored once final UPWP funding levels are known later this year. He listed major components of UPWP activities and UWPW Core Program activities. He noted that the draft proposes to regroup activities into a smaller number of categories to achieve functional synergies. He described a number of new activity highlights. He said the draft UPWP would be released on February 11 and was scheduled for final TPB approval in March.

Ms. Erickson asked why Environmental Justice was included twice in the description of major activities – in long-range planning and in public participation.

Mr. Srikanth answered that Environmental Justice concerns would be addressed in both those categories of activities, and the text sought to emphasize that point. But he suggested it could be changed.

Mr. Orleans (citizen) asked whether there are plans to coordinate activities or events with WMATA.

Mr. Srikanth said that such collaboration has occurred in the past and the TPB would be looking for such opportunities in the future.

5. Briefing on Draft FY 2017 CCWP

The Fiscal Year 2017 draft Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) was included in the meeting agenda packet. A PowerPoint presentation given by Mr. Ramfos included an overview of Commuter Connections including program benefits, program coverage area, MSA rankings for carpool and transit use, daily program impacts, the program's role in the regional planning process, the program's cost effectiveness, the proposed FY 2017 budget, and highlights of what is new with the program and budget, as well as next steps.

Mr. Ramfos explained that there is a companion Commuter Connections Strategic Plan which contains the definition of the program: "a network of public and private transportation organizations, local organizations, state funding agencies, and COG/TPB staff that work together to help reduce regional traffic congestion and improve air quality." Commuter Connections' programs provide benefits to local jurisdictions, employers and workers. In specific, Commuter Connections provides a variety of work commuting options that can lead to improved mobility in the region, a decrease in emissions, improvement in quality of life through reduced stress, commuting costs and the time it takes to commute to and from work each day. The program also helps employers with worker recruitment and retention efforts and the region with goods movement and tourist travel.

Mr. Ramfos then displayed and explained a map that outlined the program's 8-hour non-attainment coverage area. The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) service area is much larger than the 8-hour non-attainment area for program eligible workers, and even larger for workers using Commuter Connections' ridematching services. Charts with recent American Community Survey Census rankings for carpools and transit use for MSA areas show that the Washington DC region ranks as one of the top urban areas in total percentage of carpools and transit users.

Next, Mr. Ramfos reviewed the total daily impacts of the Commuter Connections program for VT, VMT, NOx, and VOC. Federal planning regulations require the TPB to approve a congestion management process (CMP) which includes Commuter Connections as the major Transportation Demand Management component. Commuter Connections also provides transportation emission reduction measure benefits for inclusion in the air quality conformity determination approved by the TPB. This is part of the annual update of the region's CLRP and TIP. Impacts from the program may be needed to address future regional or national transportation greenhouse gas emission targets. Results from Commuter Connections program impacts may also be used in new federal MAP-21 legislation performance measure requirements.

Commuter Connections has been shown to be a highly cost-effective way to reduce vehicle trips (VT), vehicle miles of travel (VMT), and vehicle emissions associated with commuting in the region. The overall program's cost-effectiveness is based on the results of the Commuter Connections TERM Analysis for both transportation and emissions impacts.

A comparison of the FY 2016 CCWP budget to the proposed FY 2017 CCWP budget was shown and the associated changes for each of the programs. Mr. Ramfos stated that there is a three and a half percent decrease in the budget from FY 2016 due to the fact that the costs associated with data collection efforts will not be as great in the new fiscal year.

Mr. Ramfos then reviewed the budget breakdown which includes about 30% of the costs going to COG/TPB staff & overhead, 55% of the costs for private sector services, 8.5% of the costs are passed through to local jurisdiction TDM programs, and 6% of the costs are attributed to direct costs.

The FY 2017 CCWP highlights include the completion of the 2016 State of the Commute Technical Report and preparation of the report to be printed for the general public, final reports for both the 2016 GRH Survey for both the Baltimore and Washington DC regions, and a report for the Retention Rate Survey. Mr. Ramfos explained that the Retention Rate Survey is a new survey being conducted this fiscal year to ascertain the length of time commuters are remaining in alternative commute modes. This will help with the overall framework methodology calculations for many of the Commuter Connections TERMS. An Evaluation of the regional Employer Outreach database will also occur as well as data collection activities for the 2016 Bike To Work Day participant survey and Maryland Employer Telework survey. A draft TERM Analysis Report will also be produced. Additionally, the program will be handling marketing activities for the GRH Baltimore program on behalf of the MTA and MDOT.

Mr. Ramfos then discussed upcoming review and approval steps for the document.

A question was asked about the Marketing and Employer Outreach in the District of Columbia regarding the transit benefit ordinance. Mr. Ramfos stated that information on the District's Transit Benefit Ordinance has been placed on the Commuter Connections web site as well as in the Employer Commuter Connections newsletter that is sent to about 8,000 employers in the region. COG/TPB staff has also promoted and participated in Transit Benefit Ordinance seminars sponsored by WMATA and goDCgo. A question was then asked about Car Free Day and the possibility of coordinated street closures in the region. Mr. Ramfos stated that the Car Free Day Steering Committee has discussed this issue at length and would like to address this issue with both the District and other interested jurisdictions. Another question asked was on the proposed budget decrease and its relation to Work Program activities. Mr. Ramfos stated that the decrease in the budget is directly related to less data collection activities that will be conducted during FY 2017. Mr. Ramfos stated the budget increases every three years due to large data collection efforts.

6. Briefing on an Evaluation of the TLC Program and Solicitation for FY 2017 Projects

Ms. Mintier presented the results of the 2016 TLC Program Evaluation. COG/TPB worked with a consultant to 1. Survey all past TLC recipients and 2. Develop recommendations to improve the program in the future. The evaluation looked at 83 completed projects between Fiscal Years 2007 – 2015, surveys of 50 past TLC recipients, and case studies of successful projects. The results of the survey showed that past recipients were overall pleased with management and results of the program. She presented ten recommendations around solicitation & outreach, project selection, and ongoing program management.

Mr. Cobb announced that the solicitation for FY 2017 TLC technical assistance projects opened on February 1, 2016. \$420,000 in funds are available for planning and design projects, including \$160,000 for Maryland projects. The TPB will also participate in a joint abstract program with the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panels. Joint abstracts are due February 25, and full applications are due April 1.

Mr. Davis asked about the types of projects that are eligible for TLC technical assistance. He specifically asked about freight-related projects.

Mr. Cobb answered that freight projects are eligible.

Mr. Emerine thanked COG/TPB for involving past recipients in the evaluation. He asked whether staff would consider a recommendation from a 2011 evaluation to fund fewer, larger projects. He expressed support for increasing staff capacity but noted that the UPWP stated a reduction in TLC funding. He mentioned the lead-up time for project initiation could be better coordinated with local government's fiscal years. He stated that staff should continue to follow-up with past recipients to ensure project success and follow-through and also consider more land use related projects.

Mr. Griffiths noted that the total TLC budget was not reduced, but the proposed budget did not include the Maryland Technical Assistance funds. The funding was not grouped together in the proposed UPWP.

Mr. Srikanth added that there will be no funding reduction for TLC. He stated that staff is constrained in what discretionary funding is available for TLC projects. He acknowledged that TLC has great support and encouragement from local jurisdictions, and that Maryland allows their technical assistance funds to support TLC. Staff will also discuss with VDOT about support for TLC. He stated that TLC is grounded in land-use strategies and is not focused squarely on transportation, and encouraged local jurisdictions to seek partnerships to utilize TLC for projects that deal with both transportation and land use.

7. Update on the development of Policy Language for the Regional Freight Plan

Mr. Meese presented on behalf of Mr. Schermann (who was not available to attend), referring to the item from the mailout package. The package included a cover memorandum highlighting changes since last month's version of the preliminary draft policy statements; the expanded and updated list itself now comprising 15 preliminary draft policy statements; and a comparison matrix showing how the 15 policy statements covered the goals identified in the TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) and the National Freight Goals. Preparation of the matrix in particular raised awareness of the issue now addressed in new policy statement #2 on the state of good repair of the freight transportation system. Based upon discussions at the October 21 TPB work session on this topic and other stakeholder input, versions of the preliminary draft policy statements had been reviewed by the Freight Subcommittee and the TPB Technical Committee. A number of comments were received and addressed, both in terms of identifying topics that needed to be addressed, as well as the wording of the statements themselves. The list was now slated to be brought to the TPB for its February 17 meeting, which would be the TPB's first look at the statements. In addition to the new policy statement on state of good repair, changes since last month's version included on policy statement #9 (addressing information sharing) being modified to replace the general term "hazardous materials" with the more precise phrase "explosive, toxic by inhalation, and radioactive materials". Policy statement #14 was modified to be phrased in a positive rather than negative way; the phrase "limiting encroachment that might preclude necessary rail capacity expansions in the future" was replaced with the phrase "providing space for necessary future rail expansion".

This current list of preliminary draft policy statements had been shared as a preview with the current TPB officers and Immediate Past Chair Phil Mendelson, and staff anticipated hearing initial comments at the TPB Steering Committee later that day.

8. Briefing on Current Regional Travel Trends

Mr. Griffiths presented on current trends in regional travel from 2000 to 2013, including changes in daily vehicle miles of travel (VMT), transit ridership, modal shares for single occupant vehicle (SOV), carpool, transit and biking commuting travel and peak period congestion levels. General findings indicate recent increases in the region's population and employment are not reflected, as it has in the past, in weekday vehicle and transit trips. A variety of factors may be the cause, including demographic and economic changes, like a growing older population and increases in telework, as well as regional economic drivers like federal spending. Future data collection and analysis will seek to explore this trend further.

Mr. Griffiths highlighted regional demographic and economic trends. Since 2000, the region has experienced a steady increases in population growth. For employment, increases from 2000 began to slow down, likely a result of the 2008 recession. This includes reductions in employment beginning in 2008 through 2011. Preliminary data for 2014 suggest a two percent growth in employment between 2015 and 2014.

Mr. Griffiths highlighted trends in federal procurement and noted it as a major driver of the region's economy. Beginning in 2010, reductions in federal funding, likely related to sequestration, resulted in smaller federal procurement spending in the Washington region. More recently, between 2013 and 2014, data indicates a nominal uptick in federal spending but much less than that seen prior to 2010. Mr. Griffiths noted this as an overarching concern for regional leaders: how can the region maintain its competitiveness and restore previous job growth rates.

Mr. Griffiths then presented on regional travel trends. Trends in the region's airports indicate no increase in the yearly total air travel since 2006, an economic indicator focused on our interregional commerce. Annual traffic counts at the edges of the region, that is, traffic inflows into the region, have also remained relatively flat slight since 2007.

Mr. Griffiths then discussed regional weekday vehicle miles travelled. Between 2007 and 2014, while the region has experienced an increase in population and employment, the number of weekday vehicles miles travelled remained flat, showing reductions in per capita vehicle miles travelled, suggesting a new regional trend unlike in the past. Preliminary data for 2015 suggest a considerable uptick for that year. Traffic congestion data collected from Mr. Meese and Mr. Pu also reached similar conclusions.

Mr. Griffiths discussed transit travel trends. For Metrorail, weekday ridership peaked in 2009 but since then have generally seen decreases. Exploring weekday trips for all transit modes, Metrobus continues to be relatively flat while slight increases seen in 2012 for all non-Metro trips remained flat since then. For commute mode share, a steady reduction was noted in the share of single-occupancy vehicle trips which is also noted in carpool commuters. Conversely, the share of transit trips increased, offsetting those declines. Also, increases in share of telework suggests work can be completed anywhere, and could account for why the region is experiencing declines in weekday trips while increases are occurring in population and employment. This will be explored in greater detail during the next household travel survey and future travel demand models.

Mr. Griffiths then took questions from the committee. Mr. Griffiths noted that changes in employment due to BRAC, especially in Arlington, could have an effect on Metro ridership numbers, although that trend would be less prevalent in the District of Columbia and other parts in the region.

Mr. Holloman asked if Mr. Griffiths has any data on inter-city passenger rail. Mr. Griffiths noted that future data collection, as part of requirements in the FAST Act, will include this.

Mr. Emerine said that flexible work schedules could be affecting trends in the data. Mr. Griffiths noted this could be a factor in peak-period weekday travel declines, especially those on 4-day schedules. Additional research on full-time versus part-time work could be a factor.

Mr. Srikanth said that the 2007-2014 period includes major shifts in the region's economy, changes in the region's federal spending, changes in gas prices, as well as Metro's long-term challenges affecting ridership. Many variables could be affecting the travel trends noted.

Mr. Milone noted the federal subsidy could play a role in the mode travel choices of many workers and, as a result, a factor affecting the findings.

9. Update on the Development of MAP-21 Performance Measures

Mr. Randall briefed the committee on updates to the U.S. DOT regulations on performance measures under MAP-21, speaking to a presentation. He noted that the new FAST Act for federal surface transportation continued these performance provisions with essentially no changes. He reviewed the schedule for publication of the proposed and/or final rulemakings for the five categories of performance rules. Rulemakings there were expected in January, and may be published in February, include the Highway Safety Improvement Program final rule and the System Performance proposed rule. He announced that just that morning the notice of proposed rulemaking for Transit Safety has been published, and that the rulemaking would be reviewed and discussed at the March Technical Committee meeting. TPB staff is continuing collaboration with DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT, as well as with WMATA and other providers of public transportation, on collecting data and planning for forecasting and target-setting for the performance provisions.

Mr. Randall then briefed the committee on transportation planning efforts being developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Initially developed under the SHRP 2 (Strategic Highway Research Program) and largely intended for highway projects but also applicable to transit projects, these efforts are collectively known as "The Works". There are three products: PlanWorks, TravelWorks, and EconWorks.

PlanWorks breaks down the state, metropolitan, and corridor project planning process into discrete steps. Users can use the website tool to look at relevant organization actors, applicable case studies, and other information. Users have found the tool very useful for communication and information.

EconWorks looks at the wider economic benefits of transportation, such as reliability for business-related travel versus congested bottlenecks and product inventory & delivery; accessibility for business-related travel; and intermodal connectivity. Mr. Randall is involved in a working group seeking to add more case studies and further improve this product.

TravelWorks is a scenario planning tool to enable the comparison of the broad impacts of various land use, investment and policy scenarios on travel demand using a Rapid Policy Analysis Tool (RPAT). However, this is a sketch-level tool; not comparable to the in-depth scenario work with TPB staff have done.

Mr. Srikanth noted that increased resources for performance planning are included in the draft FY 2017 UPWP. He also spoke to the importance of the performance provisions for all TPB members, especially the transit provisions and their applicability for local transit providers. While State DOTs bear much of the responsibility for the performance measures, there are important elements for MPOs. TPB staff will continue working on these areas, as presented to the committee in December by Mr. Schermann and Ms. McCall for the highway safety and highway conditions rulemakings. Once these performance rules are finalized, the TIP will have to include a discussion of how the projects in the TIP are leading to meeting targets set for performance for the metropolitan area.

10. Update on the Unfunded Needs Capital Working Group

Mr. Swanson said that staff was proposing to cancel the February 17 meeting of the working group. Instead staff would focus on developing information for a work session on March 16. He described work activities. He said Phase I activities, which are currently underway, include development and analysis of “No-Build” and “All-Build” scenarios. He said that Phase II will culminate in the identification of a limited list of unfunded priority projects. He said the development of this list will include identification of CLRP deficiencies and the articulation of those deficiencies would be the first stage in this process.

Mr. Swanson described the work session from January 20 at which TPB members discussed the development of a process to enhance TPB input on new CLRP project submissions. He distributed a memorandum from TPB Chairman Lovain that included five points that participants at that meeting agreed upon.

Mr. Vuksan described the development and analysis of the scenarios under Phase I. He said that staff will send a memo to jurisdiction staff asking for project details for the “All-Build” scenario. He said the memo would describe default specifications that will be used if the jurisdictions do not provide the information.

Mr. Malouff said that while it is important to share information about the different prioritization and selection processes at the state and local levels, he cautioned that these activities should not become too overwhelming and time-consuming.

11. Adjourn