

ITEM 11 - Information

February 15, 2006

Briefing on Improving CLRP Information and On Proposed New Public Involvement Activities

Staff

Recommendation:

Receive briefing on improving information on the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and on plans for enhanced public outreach activities.

Issues:

None

Background:

At the July 20, 2005 meeting, the Board was briefed on proposed consultant assistance to staff for (1) conducting outreach activities to engage community leaders and those traditionally not involved in the planning process; (2) obtaining broad and representative citizen input on key issues facing transportation planning in the region; and (3) developing more effective and timely information on the CLRP. At the January 18 meeting the Board received the CAC recommendations for improving information and analysis related to the CLRP.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: John Swanson
Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: New Public Involvement Activities for 2006

DATE: February 9, 2006

A number of activities are being launched in 2006 to improve public information and outreach related to the region's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). These efforts will focus on three key goals:

- *Engage* and *educate* community leaders, particularly those not traditionally involved in the process.
- Develop more effective and timely public *information* on the plan.
- Obtain representative citizen *input* on key issues.

Current Public Involvement Activities

The TPB's Public Involvement Process, adopted in 1998, provides a framework for current TPB public involvement activities. These include:

- Structures: Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC); Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA)
- Procedures: Public Involvement Process, including public comment periods
- TPB Website
- Documents: *TPB News*, *The Region*, *Citizens Guide*, special publications
- Public Meetings: Mostly sponsored by the Citizens Advisory Committee

Staff has made a number of public outreach improvements in the past two years, including the online public comment form, user-friendly CLRP brochures, and the recent public forums on the TPB's scenario study, which were sponsored by the CAC.

Staff has coordinated recent improvements with the CAC, which in 2005 developed a set of recommendations on ways to improve CLRP/TIP information and analysis.

Initiating New Efforts

A number of factors have catalyzed the current plans to enhance the TPB's public involvement efforts. In many ways, the timing is right; the new federal transportation reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU) calls for expanded citizen outreach, including the development of a Public Involvement Plan. And this year, the TPB is scheduled to develop its triennial update to the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). The CLRP update process provides a vehicle for improving public information and implementing new public outreach.

In addition, as noted above, the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has issued recommendations on CLRP/TIP information and analysis improvements, which were presented to the TPB at its meeting on January 18, 2006. Those recommendations are consistent with the public involvement improvements that the TPB staff is already planning.

In July of 2005, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was issued to solicit consultant support for improving public involvement activities. Respondents to the RFQ were asked, among other things, to provide information showing: experience and familiarity with the regional transportation and land use issues confronting the TPB; experience and familiarity with public involvement techniques and community leadership development; and experience in designing and implementing workshops, training programs and seminars.

Two organizations were awarded contracts in response to the RFQ: The Academy of Leadership Foundation and Fitzgerald & Halliday. The total budget for this consultant support has been set at \$100,000 through June of 2006.

Planned Activities

A number of new activities are being initiated:

- *Community Leadership Institute*

Through a series of three half-day workshops, the Institute will work with community leaders in the Washington Metropolitan area to create a deeper understanding of long-range and regional transportation planning. The Institute will develop their knowledge, skills and literacy in transportation-related issues and will empower them to get involved and act as ambassadors for the regional planning process.

The Institute will take place in the late spring of 2006. Three half-day sessions will focus on the following topics:

- Overview of Regional Transportation Decision Making
- The Land Use/Transportation Connection
- Transportation Funding: Continuing Challenges, New Opportunities

- ***Improvements in CLRP Information***

A series of improvements are being planned to make CLRP information more accessible. Activities will include:

- Create a new identity for the CLRP (branding)
- Provide more accessible web and printed information
 - o Web-based CLRP homepage
 - o Online project database
- Provide user-friendly analysis
- Clearly explain project selection

- ***Public Input Improvements***

New methods will be developed to make public input more useful to decision-makers through the transportation planning process.

Public input improvements are still under development. They may include:

- Making the CAC scenario forums a more interactive means for getting public input;
- Improving the public comment process and documentation of comments received.
- Soliciting input from a broader array of citizens, including the use of public opinion polls.