



Item #5

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MEMORANDUM**February 12, 2004**

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby *RFK*
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the January 21 TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the January 21 TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the February 18 TPB agenda.

Attachments



Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region

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February 12, 2004

Mr. Richard Parsons
President
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
51 Monroe Street, Suite 1609
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Parsons:

In your letter of January 30, 2004 to the Chairman of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the Honorable Christopher Zimmerman, you note that "traffic forecast modeling for the ICC Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be conducted using a modified version of the TPB's Version 2 model." You indicate that you would appreciate being notified of the availability of information on the model and its use for the ICC study, and to receive this information as soon as it is released to the public.

At the January 23, 2004 meeting of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee, I reported that work on improvements to the Version 2.1C model is ongoing, with a staff goal of releasing the model improvements and results at the time that such results are presented for public review at the ICC public meetings, currently scheduled for late spring or early summer of 2004.

More recently, however, on February 11, 2004 the Maryland Department of Transportation submitted to the TPB two build corridors for the ICC, each with managed lanes and express bus service, to be included in the conformity analysis for the 2004 amendments to the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In order to include this project in the conformity analysis, TPB staff will be implementing improvements to the Version 2.1C model which address key features and impacts of the project. Accordingly, TPB staff plans to release for review and comment an initial Version 2.1D model which incorporates all of the improvements made to date to the adopted Version 2.1C model, as well as some additional improvements resulting from the first phase report of the TRB Review Committee. This release will occur at the March 19, 2004 meeting of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee. On that date a complete set of documentation will be available to all interested parties, along with full model set-ups, data inputs, and validation results.

Mr. Richard Parsons

February 12, 2004

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I wish to assure you that the TPB staff is implementing all of the viable improvements identified for the Version 2.1C model as quickly as practicable, and will be making the results of this work available for review and comment by all interested parties in the TPB process in a timely and convenient manner. TPB staff looks forward to receiving your comments and those of other interested parties on the new Version 2.1D model, beginning with its release on March 19, 2004, and continuing as work proceeds on the refinement and use of the model over the coming months.....

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronald F. Kirby".

Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning



Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
51 Monroe Street, Suite 1609, Rockville, MD 20850
301-738-0015 phone • 301-738-8792 fax • www.montgomery-chamber.com

January 30, 2004

The Honorable Christopher Zimmerman, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chairman Zimmerman:

The Intercounty Connector (ICC) is the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's number one transportation priority.

Four decades of study and debate have identified the ICC as the single most important and effective project now under consideration in terms of the substantial traffic relief it has been shown to deliver for the citizens of our region. The Chamber believes construction of this facility is essential to our County's current and future mobility, prosperity and quality of life and ought to be at the very top of the Washington Region's list of transportation priorities. Not only is the ICC consistent with the Maryland Smart Growth Act of 1997, it is necessary to support decades of existing land-use planning in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. It is also consistent with the Council of Government's stated policy priority of improving road and transit connections between existing major activity centers in the region.

It has come to the Chamber's attention that traffic forecast modeling for the ICC Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be conducted using a modified version of the TPB's Version 2 model. As a stakeholder very much engaged in the ICC DEIS process, the Chamber would very much appreciate being notified of the availability and receiving all information on files, scenarios for the ICC study and other information on the model itself as well as all test outputs as soon they are released to the public.

If you have any questions regarding this request, the impacts of the ICC in previous studies, or the tremendous public support this project enjoys in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Parsons', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Parsons
President



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February 12, 2004

Mr. Neal Fitzpatrick
Audubon Naturalist Society of the
Central Atlantic States

Mr. Lee Epstein
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Mr. Michael Replogle
Environmental Defense

Dear Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Epstein, and Replogle:

In your letter of January 28, 2004 to the Chairman of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the Honorable Christopher Zimmerman, you refer to a January 16, 2004 telephone conversation which I had with your legal counsel, Mr. Langley R. Shook. You state that I informed your legal counsel that with respect to "the TPB's latest improved version of the Version 2.1 travel model" that you "had all the data and set-ups necessary to properly and fully utilize the model." Please be advised that my statement to your legal counsel was in reference to the adopted Version 2.1C model used for the conformity analysis approved by the TPB on December 17, 2003, and not the improvements to the Version 2.1C model which are currently under development. As indicated in the attached correspondence, full model set-ups for and data inputs to the adopted Version 2.1C model have been transmitted to your consultant, Mr. Norm Marshall, as I reported to your legal counsel. (I have not yet received a response from Mr. Marshall to my letter of October 29, 2003 offering to provide the final Round 6.3 socio-economic forecasts which he requested in his letter of October 10, 2003.) No data or model set-ups have yet been documented or made available on the improvements to the Version 2.1C travel model currently under development.

You also state in your January 28, 2004 letter that the December 12, 2003 memorandum, "Maryland Inter County Connector (ICC) Corridor Base Year 2000 Validation Using Version 2.1C Travel Demand Model" which was included as Appendix B of a TPB report of December 24, 2003 "documented that an improved Version 2.1C model was completed last summer by COG staff." In fact, this December 12, 2003 memorandum was adapted from a project documentation memo prepared for, and approved by, the ICC Travel Demand Task Force in August 2003. The

Mr. Neal Fitzpatrick
Mr. Lee Epstein
Mr. Michael Replogle
February 12, 2004
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memorandum reports on detailed validation procedures applied to the Version 2.1C travel demand model in preparation for its use in the ICC Corridor study; documents the status of model validation activities as of August 2003; and notes that "some additional changes to the model are still possible, pending review by the project team." Section 1.A of the TPB report of December 24, 2003 references Appendix B to the report as an example of the kind of model refinements that can be made for other areas of the region and incorporated into improved versions of the regional model. Element 1.A 1 of the proposed TPB work program for the remainder of FY2004 through FY2008 presented as the TPB Travel Forecasting subcommittee meeting of January 23, 2004 states that the TPB staff intends to "focus on implementing network coding refinements, such as those considered in the ICC study area, to other areas in the regional network system."

As you note in your January 28, 2004 letter, since August 2003 "improvements have continued to be made, especially with respect to the ICC study area and alternative alignments." I reported at the January 23, 2004 meeting of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee that work on these improvements has continued, with the goal of releasing the model improvements and results at the time that such results are presented for public review at the ICC public meetings, currently scheduled for late spring or early summer of 2004.

More recently, however, on February 11, 2004 the Maryland Department of Transportation submitted to the TPB two build corridors for the ICC, each with managed lanes and express bus service, to be included in the conformity analysis for the 2004 amendments to the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In order to include this project in the conformity analysis, TPB staff will be implementing improvements to the Version 2.1C model which address key features and impacts of the project. Accordingly, TPB staff plans to release for review and comment an initial Version 2.1D model which incorporates all of the improvements made to date to the adopted Version 2.1C model, as well as some additional improvements resulting from the first phase report of the TRB Review Committee. This release will occur at the March 19, 2004 meeting of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee. On that date a complete set of documentation will be available to all interested parties, along with full model set-ups, data inputs, and validation results.

Toward the end of your letter of January 20, 2004 you state that following the release by TPB staff of model set-ups on earlier validation work leading up to the currently adopted Version 2.1C model, "the resulting independent oversight led to the identification of a number of substantive errors, some of which were subsequently acknowledged by TPB staff and corrected in model Version 2.1C. Other issues continue to be discussed as concerns of the National Academy of Sciences/TRB model review panel." TPB staff is not aware of any "substantive errors" that were identified in

Mr. Neal Fitzpatrick
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February 12, 2004
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the course of this previous "independent oversight" activity, all of which was documented in a detailed comment and response format and made available to agencies and stakeholders involved in the TPB modeling process. To the contrary, TPB staff was gratified that the TRB Review Committee concurred with TPB responses on key issues raised during this earlier "independent oversight" activity, including the fact that all network traffic is included in emissions calculations, and that using data from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) rather than locally gathered data to develop or enhance a travel demand model is not to be recommended. Even with respect to the use of K-factors in the model, which the TRB Committee noted is "the subject of active, continuing debate among modeling professionals," the adopted Version 2.1C model subjected significantly fewer trip interchanges to such factors than an alternative model structure recommended by your consultant, Smart Mobility. Other issues raised by the TRB Committee are being addressed in ongoing TPB work program efforts to improve the Version 2.1C model, as described in the December 24, 2003 document presented at the January 23, 2004 meeting of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee.

In closing, I wish to assure you that the TPB staff is committed to implementing all of the viable improvements identified for the Version 2.1C model as soon as practicable, and to making the results of this work available for review and comment by all interested parties in the TPB process in a timely and convenient manner. TPB staff looks forward to receiving your comments and those of other interested parties on the new Version 2.1D model, beginning with its release on March 19, 2004, and continuing as work proceeds on the refinement and use of the model over the coming months.

Sincerely,



Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

cc: Langley R. Shook, Sidley, Austin Brown and Wood
Nelson Castellanos, Federal Highway Administration
Neil Pedersen, Maryland State Highway Administration



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October 29, 2003

Mr. Norman L. Marshall, President
Smart Mobility
Aldrich House, Suite #3
16 Beaver Meadow Road
P.O. Box 750
Norwich, VT 05055-0750

Dear Mr. Marshall:

In response to your letter of October 10, 2003, we are prepared to provide the following data:

1. Forecasts of population, households and employment from Round 6.3 of the COG Cooperative Forecasting process for the years 2000 through 2030 in five-year increments for the 2191-TAZ Expanded Cordon region in ASCII flat-file format with file format description and control totals in hard copy. There is no charge for Round 6.3 in this form.
2. The Round 6.3 data in Excel spreadsheet format with the same hard copy control totals as in Item 1. The cost for Round 6.3 in this form is \$ 230.00.
3. The Round 6.3 data in the TP+ zone.asc input file format with the same hard copy control totals as in Item 1. The cost for Round 6.3 in this form is \$ 350.00.

Please inform us in writing in hard copy as to which item or combination of items listed above is desired. The cost, if any, will then be invoiced by the COG Office of Administration upon completion of delivery of the data.

If there are any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. G. Toni Giardini of my staff at (202) 962-3317.

Mr. Norman L. Marshall
October 29, 2003
Page 2
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Sincerely,



Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning



October 10, 2003

Mr. Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Mr. Kirby:

Thank you for recently sending us the Version 2.1C model files.

In order to evaluate future conditions we would greatly appreciate it if you could supply us with the Round 6.3 final socioeconomic forecasts. It would be most helpful if this includes both a spreadsheet version and the TP+ zone.asc input file.

If there are any questions about this request, please contact me at (802) 649-5422.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman L. Marshall".

Norman L. Marshall
President



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September 16, 2003

Mr. Norman L. Marshall, President

Smart Mobility

Aldrich Hpuse, Suite # 3

16 Beaver Meadow Road

P.O. Box 750

Norwich, VT 05055-0750

Dear Mr. Marshall:

This letter transmits the following data in response to your letter request of September 11, 2003:

1. Draft highway and transit networks, input, control, support and TP+ script files and software to run the demographic sub-models and accomplish trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice and trip assignment using the COG/TPB Travel Forecasting Model Version 2.1/TP+, Release C for three time periods for the simulation years of 1994, 2000 and 2025. The data are contained in a CD-R labeled "CGV2_1CX". A memo by Ron Milone to Mr. Toni Giardini dated April 23, 2003, and titled "Transmittal of Version2.1/TP+, Release C Files" is included.
2. Copies of the following documents:
 - a. "COG/TPB Travel Forecasting Model Version 2.1/TP+, Release C Calibration Report (DRAFT)" dated December 23, 2002.
 - b. "COG/TPB Travel Forecasting Model Version 2.1/TP+, Release C User's Guide (DRAFT)" dated December 23, 2002.

If there are any questions concerning the Version 2.1/TP+, Release C Travel Model, please contact Mr. Ron Milone at (202) 962-3283. Questions regarding any other problems should be directed to Mr. G. Toni Giardini at (202) 962-3317.

Mr. Norman L. Marshall
September 16, 2003
Page 2
SMRTMOB1.ltr

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronald F. Kirby".

Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

cc: Mr. James Hogan, COG/DTP
Mr. Ron Milone, COG/DTP
Mr. Michael Clifford, COG/DTP



September 11, 2003

Mr. Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Mr. Kirby:

We appreciate the work you and you staff have done in comparing the COG/TPB Version 2.1C travel forecasting model and the Smart Mobility Inc. enhanced model used in preparation of the report: *More Sprawl, More Traffic, No Relief: An Analysis of Proposed Potomac River Crossings*, October 2002.

We understand that the Version 2.1C model was released in December 2002. We do not have this version of the model.

Please send us Version 2.1C model files and documentation. If there are any questions about this request, please contact me or Brian Gray at (802) 649-5422.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman L. Marshall".

Norman L. Marshall
President

Environmental Defense
*** Chesapeake Bay Foundation * Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central**
Atlantic States

January 28, 2004

The Honorable Chris Zimmerman
Chairman, Metropolitan Washington
Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol St. NE #300
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Release of Improved TPB Version 2.1 C Travel Model Setups

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

On December 15, 2003, we submitted a request to the TPB for access to the latest Version 2 travel model data and software setups, reflecting recent enhancements to the Version 2C model. Today, we are writing to again request the immediate release of the full model setups for the TPB's latest improved version of the Version 2.1 C travel model to members of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee and other interested stakeholders. Our counsel had been informed by Mr. Kirby by telephone on January 16 that "we had all the data and set-ups necessary" to properly and fully utilize the model for our purposes.

A December 12, 2003, memo, *Maryland Intercounty Connector (ICC) Corridor Base Year 2000 Validation using Version 2.1 C Travel Demand Model*, was included as Appendix A of the Transportation Planning Board's December 24, 2003 report, *Descriptions of Proposed Work Elements for the TPB Models Development Program to a) Address Concerns Raised by the TRB Committee's First Letter Report b) Advance the State of Modeling Practice in the Metropolitan Washington Region*. This 19-page memo documented that an improved Version 2.1 C model was completed last summer by COG staff with consultant assistance and was documented in a memo prepared for and approved by the ICC Travel Demand Task Force in August 2003. Extensive information about the validation of this model against TPB and other regional traffic and transportation data was contained in the report to the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee meeting on January 23, 2004, seeking the Subcommittee's affirmation of this work as a response to the comments of the TRB peer review panel's criticism of the TPB Version 2 travel model. Improvements have continued to be made, especially with respect to the ICC study area and alternative alignments.

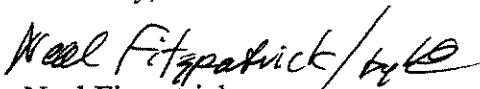
At that January 23, 2004 meeting, Michael Replogle requested immediate release of the improved Version 2.1 C travel model base year validation data sets to interested members of the Travel Forecasting Subcommittee and other stakeholders, noting that the members of the Subcommittee could properly evaluate this extensive presentation of model refinements and validation results only by full access to the model setups. TPB staff indicated that they would not release the model setups until the ICC public meetings in March or April 2004, stating that this model refinement (which would be billed as Version 2.1 D) was a "work in progress." However, it was apparent from the

discussion that this model is now already in active production use for forecasting and analysis. The public should have equal access to precisely the same data, set-ups and information.

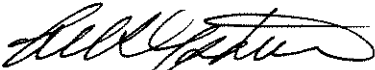
Mr. Replogle noted that a similar situation occurred in 2002, when TPB staff presented extensive information on the initial validation of the Version 2.1A model while denying interested stakeholders access to the full model setups for independent examination. In response to an immediate subsequent request to the Transportation Planning Board, the staff decision to deny public access to the model setups was overturned and the model setups were released. The resulting independent oversight led to the identification of a number of substantive errors, some of which were subsequently acknowledged by TPB staff and corrected in model Version 2.1 C. Other issues continue to be discussed as concerns of the National Academy of Sciences/TRB model peer review panel.

We ask you to overturn this staff decision to deny timely public access for independent oversight and use of these latest model improvements and upgrades. The public risks being prejudiced by tardy release of this information, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process may be undermined if the public's comments on the ICC analysis are constrained by the fact that modeling data and information are released too late for a full and adequate independent evaluation.

Sincerely,



Neal Fitzpatrick
Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States



Lee Epstein
Chesapeake Bay Foundation



Michael Replogle
Environmental Defense

cc: Langley R. Shook, Sidley, Austin Brown and Wood
Nelson Castellanos, Federal Highway Administration
Neil Pedersen, State Highway Administration



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January 21, 2004

Mr. Robert Smith, Chairman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors
600 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Recommendations on Transit Services for People with Disabilities

Dear Mr. Smith:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has recently accepted two recommendations for improving transit services for people with disabilities developed through its Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee, chaired by the Honorable Kathy Porter, Mayor of Takoma Park and TPB member. The AFA Advisory Committee includes representatives from low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. The TPB created this committee to advise it on issues, programs and services important to these groups.

The TPB is transmitting to the WMATA Board of Directors for its consideration the enclosed AFA recommendations regarding bus and rail services in the region as well as a proposal for a study of MetroAccess.

Recently, the AFA committee was invited to participate in the newly created WMATA Regional Paratransit Task Force that will recommend actions on MetroAccess eligibility and methods to market transit services to persons with disabilities. The TPB looks forward to a continuing dialogue with WMATA on ways to provide people with disabilities greater freedom and mobility in the Washington region.

Sincerely,

Christopher Zimmerman
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

**TPB Access for All Advisory Committee
Comments and Recommendations
on WMATA's Efforts to Mainstream People with Disabilities
on the Bus and Rail System**

December 2003

Overall Comments

- The TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee has reviewed WMATA's *Mainstreaming Individuals with Disabilities Onto MetroBus and MetroRail* report and commends WMATA's efforts to inform and train people with disabilities to use the fixed-route system, MetroBus and MetroRail.
- The report is very thorough, provides an excellent summary of the importance of mainstreaming options, and includes many good recommendations for increasing the MetroBus and MetroRail ridership by individuals with disabilities.
- The AFA supports the mainstreaming effort and the use of travel training to help more people with disabilities use the fixed route system.
- The committee recognizes that serving a large number of people with disabilities in a region as expansive as metropolitan Washington is a challenge. Further complicating this challenge is the geographic dispersment of people with disabilities, and the number of different types of disabilities-- physical, hidden, cognitive, hearing and visually impaired – each with different transportation challenges to address.
- AFA would like to assist WMATA in the mainstreaming efforts – particularly the mainstreaming option “Customer Support Services”. Recommendations under this option include improved print information that “use pictures, symbols and simple text...”. Tactile and auditory maps, improved website accessibility, fare incentives, and service enhancements are also recommendations the AFA strongly endorses as important for mainstreaming.
- Many of these recommendations would help attract and retain the general public and people with limited English skills as well as people with disabilities.
- The report does not reference the issue of how complaints from persons with disabilities will be administered. These persons may believe they have been discriminated against or believe WMATA is not adhering to ADA requirements in terms of fixed route service. The AFA recommends that WMATA clearly delineate who in the agency administers and resolves ADA discrimination complaints—for both fixed route service and Metro Access--and the manner in which this information will be disseminated to the public.

Concerns

- The AFA would like to emphasize the feedback from community-based and governmental organizations that were interviewed for the “Mainstreaming” study. These organizations have commented that critical improvements to the fixed-route system are needed if WMATA intends to attract and retain customers with disabilities.
- In particular, the AFA is concerned about the reliability of the fixed-route system for people with disabilities. Suggested improvements that would increase the reliability and accessibility of the system cited by these groups in the report include:
 - The elevators and escalators should work routinely in the MetroRail system;
 - Increased lighting and additional signage at MetroBus and MetroRail stations is important;
 - Enhanced awareness and sensitivity towards people with disabilities from transit employees is needed;
 - Improved location, access and maintenance of bus stops are important;
 - The bus stops and train stops need to be consistently and clearly announced;
 - Transit information needs to be improved and easier to access; and
 - Focus groups with disability partners were recommended as a way to collect information on needed system improvements.
- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has indicated that a recurring complaint FTA gets is that riders with disabilities waiting at a bus stop are told lifts are not working and such riders have to catch the next bus. The AFA asks that WMATA operators be reminded that it is their responsibility that buses are in working order (with a properly operating lift), and that operators must offer lifts at bus stops and assist persons with disabilities.
- The AFA committee stresses the importance of coordinating with the other transit systems in the region on travel training and additional mainstreaming efforts. Many people access the Metro system from local transit systems such as the Fairfax Connector, Ride-On, the Bus and ART. Regional coordination on travel training could ensure that more customers with disabilities are reached. Customers should be knowledgeable on the full range of transit options available and each system should be accessible and uniform for people with disabilities. Fairfax County is reaching out to people with disabilities with a bus that has been designed to train people with disabilities on how to use the Fairfax Connector system.
- Feeder bus services are particularly important for assisting disabled customers in accessing the Metro system. Feeder bus services should be expanded, and coordinated with the local jurisdictions.
- There is growing evidence that deficiencies in the pedestrian environment, particularly at street crossings, render some fixed routes inaccessible. Crossing streets can be a real barrier to using transit.

- Local jurisdictions and transportation agencies need to assist with the mainstreaming effort—especially in helping to ensure that bus stops are accessible and accommodating to people with disabilities.
 - The results from the bus stop studies that several local jurisdictions have conducted could be useful to WMATA in assessing the accessibility of bus stops for people with disabilities. The AFA also encourages all the large counties to conduct such studies.
 - WMATA should measure the outcome of the mainstreaming efforts. The measures to be used to test for success need to be carefully defined to reflect the different types of disabilities.
-
- WMATA’s travel training program should describe the full range of transit options available to people with disabilities – MetroAccess, Metrobus and other bus systems, and Metrorail. As stated earlier, the travel training should be coordinated with the local jurisdictions and other transit systems.
 - Travel training should be prioritized for those who need it the most.
 - Travel training efforts also need to educate non-disabled transit riders who play a major role in making the fixed-route system easier to use for disabled riders. Customers need to be reminded that priority seating and elevators are for people with disabilities and they need to allow space and time for people with disabilities to board and exit trains and buses.

AFA Recommendations

I. Coordinate with Other Bus Systems and Improve Reliability of MetroBus and MetroRail

- **Coordinate with other systems.** Mainstreaming efforts should be coordinated with county and city transit systems throughout the region. Many people access the WMATA system from the local systems, such as Ride-On and Fairfax Connector, which need to be fully accessible and reliable for the “Metro is Accessible” project to be effective.
- **Improve reliability** of the WMATA system to attract and retain the targeted riders. The AFA fully supports recommendations in the mainstreaming report to increase the reliability of train and bus systems. These specific recommendations include:
 - Ensure that elevators and escalators work routinely;
 - Increase lighting and signage;
 - Improve accessibility to bus stops;
 - Ensure that bus drivers call out stops and have working wheelchair lifts; and
 - Improve transit information.

In addition to helping people with disabilities, these improvements are also important for people with limited English skills, those traveling with small children, bicyclists and the general public.

II. Conduct a Study of MetroAccess

- Given the success of the WMATA “Mainstreaming” study, a study of Metro’s paratransit service should now be conducted to identify ways to serve the greatest number of people with the current budget. The study should examine if there are there more cost-effective ways to better serve more people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed route system.
- The study should be conducted in the same time frame and budget as the “Mainstreaming” study.

This recommendation comes from budgetary concerns highlighted recently in the press that have serious implications for current and future users of MetroAccess, which is the only option for a significant and growing number of people with disabilities. This makes the timely completion of this study even more critical.



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February 4, 2004

The Honorable John Warner
U.S. Senate
225 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Senator Warner:

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), I want to express my appreciation and support for your joint effort with Senator Graham to increase metropolitan planning funding in Senate bill S.1072 (SAFETEA) to 1.5 percent of the six core programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including a share of the equity bonus program. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) need an increase in planning funds to account for the 46 new MPOs that have been created under federal law based on the 2000 Census, the new air quality non-attainment areas designated as a result of the 8-hour ozone and fine particulate standards, and the additional responsibilities defined in SAFETEA.

As the MPO for the Metropolitan Washington Region, the TPB welcomes the new MPO responsibilities defined in SAFETEA:

- Inclusion of the protection of water quality, habitat, and agricultural and forest land;
- Promotion of the linkage of transportation and development goals;
- Expansion of public participation techniques;
- Inclusion of metropolitan transportation plans in the environmental review process for transportation projects; and
- Expansion of MPO responsibilities for regional transportation operations and real-time information sharing on traffic conditions.

The TPB also needs additional planning funds to support the collection of more current and comprehensive data on personal travel and on the movement of light and heavy trucks in the Washington region. Such data are needed to develop improved forecasting models for personal and truck travel in order to better assess the benefits and impacts of alternative transportation investments. The TPB is currently experiencing greatly increased interest in and requests for this kind of data and analysis from federal and state agencies, stakeholder groups and the general public. This need for better data and forecasting methods will be even greater with the new MPO responsibilities included in SAFETEA, particularly those related to public participation and the environmental review process for major transportation projects.

The Honorable John Warner
February 4, 2004
Page 2

Our recent experiences with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Improvement Project and the Dulles Rail Extension have reminded us that a good planning process on the front end can expedite decisions and help avoid long delays and increased project costs.

Your support for increased metropolitan planning funds is vitally important and much appreciated. It is gratifying to know that in defining increased responsibilities for MPOs, Congress is prepared to provide the necessary funding to support these increased activities. Thank you again for your efforts on behalf of MPOs and your support for increased planning funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Zimmerman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Zimmerman
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



District of Columbia

Bowie

College Park

Frederick County

Gaithersburg

Greenbelt

Montgomery County

Prince George's County

Rockville

Takoma Park

Alexandria

Arlington County

Fairfax

Fairfax County

Falls Church

Loudoun County

Manassas

Manassas Park

Prince William County

February 4, 2004

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
U.S. Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Senator Mikulski:

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), I am seeking your support for the joint effort of Senators Warner and Graham to increase metropolitan planning funding in Senate bill S.1072 (SAFETEA) to 1.5 percent of the six core programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including a share of the equity bonus program. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) need an increase in planning funds to account for the 46 new MPOs that have been created under federal law based on the 2000 Census, the new air quality non-attainment areas designated as a result of the 8-hour ozone and fine particulate standards, and the additional responsibilities defined in SAFETEA.

As the MPO for the Metropolitan Washington Region, the TPB welcomes the new MPO responsibilities defined in SAFETEA:

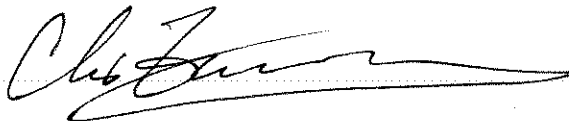
- Inclusion of the protection of water quality, habitat, and agricultural and forest land;
- Promotion of the linkage of transportation and development goals;
- Expansion of public participation techniques;
- Inclusion of metropolitan transportation plans in the environmental review process for transportation projects; and
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The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
February 4, 2004
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Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County

February 4, 2004

The Honorable George F. Allen
U.S. Senate
708 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Senator Allen:

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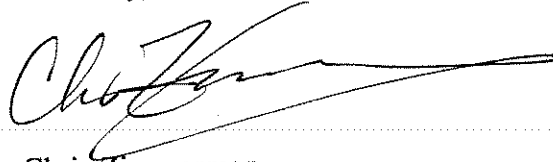
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The Honorable George F. Allen
February 4, 2004
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Chris Zimmerman
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



February 4, 2004

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Manassas Park
Prince William County

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
U.S. Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Senator Sarbanes:

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), I am seeking your support for the joint effort of Senators Warner and Graham to increase metropolitan planning funding in Senate bill S.1072 (SAFETEA) to 1.5 percent of the six core programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including a share of the equity bonus program. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) need an increase in planning funds to account for the 46 new MPOs that have been created under federal law based on the 2000 Census, the new air quality non-attainment areas designated as a result of the 8-hour ozone and fine particulate standards, and the additional responsibilities defined in SAFETEA.

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The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
February 4, 2004
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