

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Eric Randall
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SUBJECT: Update on the TPB Bus On Shoulder (BOS) Task Force

DATE: February 1, 2013

At the July 18, 2012 meeting of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), it was requested that a task force be established to identify promising locations in the region to operate buses on the shoulders of highways. The proposed membership, work plan, and schedule were approved at the September 19 TPB meeting.

Work Plan

The approved work plan for the task force has three tasks, with the results of each to be summarized in a technical memorandum.

Task 1 – Summary of Local and National Experience with Bus On Shoulders

Evaluate and summarize BOS experience in the region and elsewhere, including safety, roadway engineering, and bus service operations aspects as well as federal regulations and state legislation.

Task 2 – Assessment of the Feasibility of BOS at Specific Locations

Stakeholder agencies will identify potential corridors for BOS operation on the region's highway network, based on 1) existing highway congestion locations, 2) current bus service, and 3) highway shoulder conditions. Preliminary data will be collected to validate the location selection.

Task 3 – Analysis of Selected Locations in the Region

This task will summarize identified issues and challenges with safe implementation for the region. In addition, a benefit-cost analysis will be conducted to assess the potential for implementation of BOS service on selected corridors/routes.

Task Force Progress

The first meeting of the BOS Task Force was held on October 17, 2012. The meeting included presentations from VDOT, SHA, and TPB staff, followed by a roundtable discussion of local experience and common issues in implementing BOS operations. Highlights of the meeting were drafted and published.

A draft Technical Memo #1 summarizing highlights of local and national experience with BOS was published November 26. Information from implementing agency guidebooks and presentations, and results from Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) reports, was summarized, as well as local experience with BOS operations on VA-267 and US-29 (MD).

Following the first meeting, stakeholder agencies were asked to identify potential corridors for BOS operation on the region’s highway network, based on current and potential bus service, existing traffic conditions, and existing shoulders that could potentially be used for bus operations. The selected corridors for preliminary analysis included the MD 5/US 301 corridor in Prince George’s and Charles Counties and the I-270 corridor from City of Frederick to the Capital Beltway, both in Maryland; and the I-66 Inside the Beltway Pilot Project taking place in Virginia. Other corridors were suggested, but are not being studied, including: DC-295, the US-29 corridor (Maryland) from Burtonsville (existing BOS) to I-70; and the US-50 corridor (Virginia). TPB staff held several rounds of discussions with state highway staff, and the progress of the study was also discussed at the January 2013 TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee, to collect regional input.

Task Force Meeting #2

The second meeting of the task force was held on January 23, 2013, prior to that day’s TPB meeting. The meeting included presentations from VDOT, SHA, and TPB staff, which provided an overview of the types of data available for analyzing the feasibility of three selected corridors and the issues and challenges associated with further in-depth analysis. Next steps in the analysis and in support of tasks two and three of the work plan were discussed.

All published materials of the BOS Task Force are available online at:
<http://www.mwcog.org/bostf>

Schedule of Work

In February, highlights from the second task force meeting and a draft of the Technical Memo #2 will be published. The final meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for April 17, 2013 (prior to TPB that day).

