



## STUDIES EXAMINE WAYS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS TO UNDERUTILIZED TRANSIT STATIONS

One recent study by the TPB and another ongoing study by Metro are looking at low-cost ways to boost ridership at underutilized transit stations in the region—mainly by making it possible for more people who live or work near the stations to get there safely on foot or by bicycle.

At its May 20 meeting, the TPB was briefed on the

two studies. John Swanson, who led the TPB study, explained the motivation for the recent effort.

“With the focus lately on how congested our roads and Metro system are, it’s encouraging to know that we have untapped capacity in the existing system,” Swanson said. “And it’s important that we identify that capacity and low-cost ways to take advantage of it. We

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## POTENTIAL GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION STRATEGIES TO UNDERGO ANALYSIS

At its May 20 meeting, the TPB was briefed on the recent work of a group established by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to identify promising greenhouse gas reduction strategies in the Washington region.

The group, known as the Multi-Sector Working Group, kicked off its work in January of this year. On May 8, it finalized a list of potential strategies to undergo analysis this summer to determine which strategies offer the greatest potential emissions reductions and other benefits relative to cost.

Bob Griffiths of TPB staff briefed the Board. He explained that the strategies slated for analysis span the four key sectors from which the region’s greenhouse gas emissions come—energy, transportation, land-use, and the built environment. He said that the consultant team hired to assist with the analysis will consider strategies that are viable and implementable, as well as “stretch” strategies that would take more effort and a longer timeframe to achieve.

Among the transportation-sector strategies that will undergo analysis are reducing vehicle trips and vehicle miles of travel, according to Griffiths. One of the ways

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### Upcoming meetings and items of interest:

**TPB Meeting: June 17, 2015**

- Briefing on the Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the National Capital Region
- Briefing on the COG State of the Region Infrastructure Report

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# GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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to do this that the consultant team will study is by improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure within mixed-use Activity Centers.

The consultant team will also study the role that parking management strategies might play in helping to reduce vehicle travel. Board member Marc Elrich asked whether the consultants would analyze the impacts of parking caps and other policies to encourage travelers to make trips by modes other than car.

“Will you analyze parking management?” Elrich asked. “Because if you want to limit the number of vehicle miles traveled, you limit the number of parking spaces and the number of vehicles miles travel goes down,” he said. “And then you don’t have to spend a bunch of money incentivizing other modes of travel.”

Griffiths said that parking management policies would be one of many demand management actions that the consultant will analyze.

Griffiths also explained that the current analysis will look at alternative vehicle and fuel technology and strategies to enhance

the operational efficiency of the transportation system—through the use of things like vehicle-to-vehicle communications and better incident management.

In the energy and built environment sectors, he said, the analysis will look at strategies like improving energy efficiency for both new and existing buildings, reducing emissions from power plants, and educating and motivating the public to take personal actions to reduce emissions.

COG’s Multi-Sector Working Group will seek public comment on the results of the analysis later this summer. The group sought input from stakeholders and the public earlier this year as it developed the list of strategies to undergo analysis.

In addition to the analysis going on this summer, the Multi-Sector Working Group has also begun exploring possible emissions-reduction goals and targets for all of the sectors, which is another of the group’s charges.

“On a parallel track, we’re beginning to talk about an exploration of setting goals and targets for all of the sectors,” Griffiths said. “As we do that, we want to look at what other

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## TPB Acronyms

<b>AFA</b>	Access for All Advisory Committee	<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>CAC</b>	Citizens Advisory Committee	<b>MDOT</b>	Maryland Department of Transportation
<b>CLRP</b>	Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan	<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>COG</b>	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments	<b>VDOT</b>	Virginia Department of Transportation
<b>DDOT</b>	District Department of Transportation	<b>WMATA</b>	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## PLANS FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL IN VIRGINIA UNDER STUDY

The TPB was briefed at its May 20 meeting about a Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) study of a potential high-speed rail corridor between Washington, DC, and Richmond, Virginia. The study is part of an effort to develop a larger high-speed rail network in the Southeast, connecting Washington, Richmond, Atlanta, and Jacksonville, Florida.

DRPT's Emily Stock said that the purpose of the projects is to make passenger rail a competitive option compared to air travel and travel on congested interstate highways in the corridor. To do this, DRPT is considering a variety of improvements, including adding an additional mainline track to the existing two-track system, adding new sidings and signals so that there is more opportunity for trains to pass each other, and straightening curves to allow for higher speeds. As a result, DRPT hopes to improve the reliability of service, decrease travel times, and create more opportunity to increase the frequency of trains.

DRPT is coordinating with commuter and freight rail providers in the corridor which are also planning improvements in anticipation of future growth.

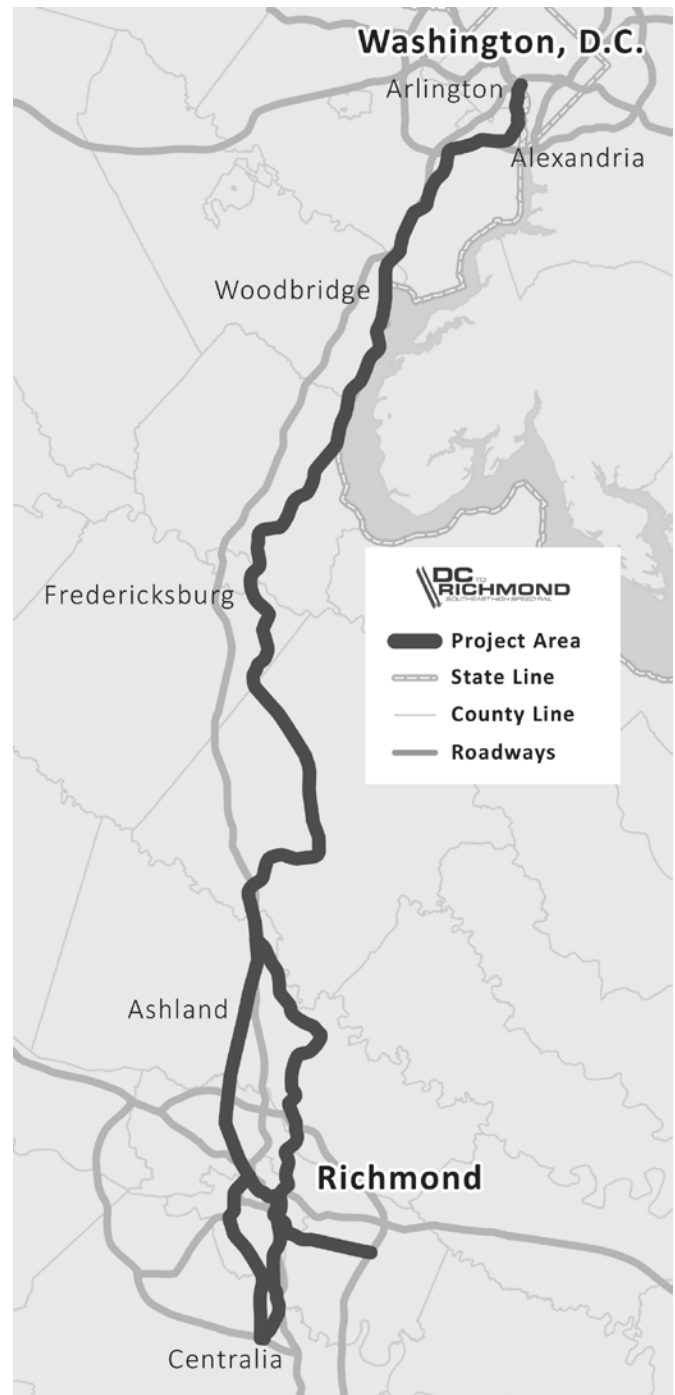
Board member Jonathan Way, from Manassas, asked how this project might impact travel time from Washington to Richmond.

Stock said that the upgrades could reduce what is now a two-hour trip by about 30 minutes. She added that most of the time savings would come from improved reliability, not necessarily faster speeds.

Jay Fiset, who represents Arlington County on the Board, asked whether the planned upgrades provide an opportunity to create a trail in the right of way that could be used by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Stock said that the right of way is congested and that it seems that it is unlikely that trails would be built along the corridor.

The Washington to Richmond high-speed rail project is currently undergoing environmental analysis. A



series of open houses took place recently in Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria to answer questions and gather public input. The agency will seek further input from the public later this year.

The final study is expected to be completed in 2017. ♦

# PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

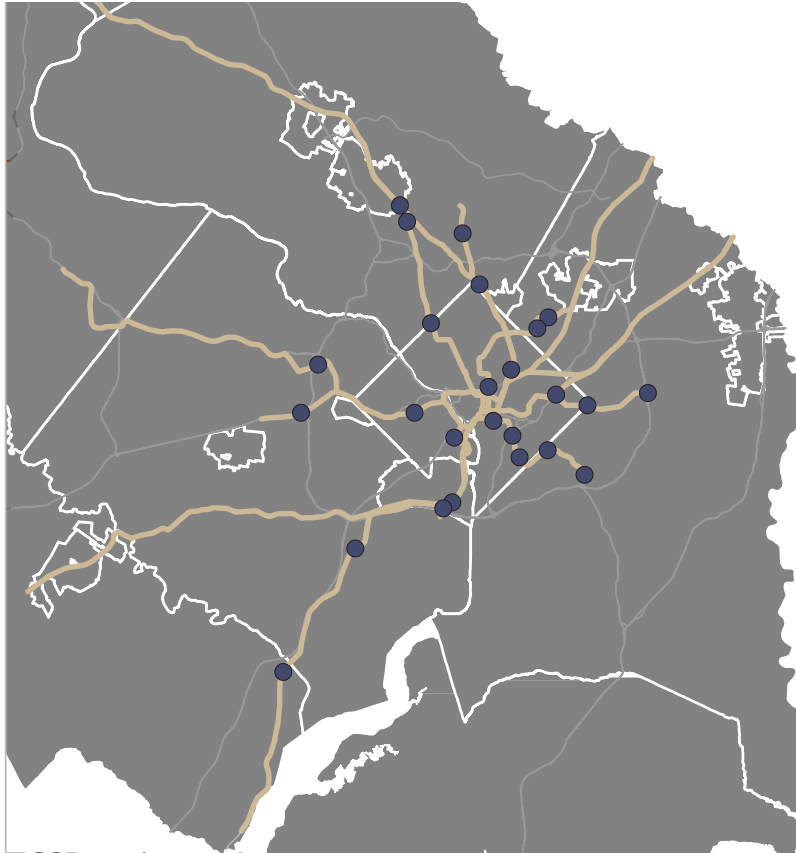
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know that building sidewalks, for example, is a lot cheaper than building new transit lines or new roads.”

are prioritizing local projects for funding, reviewing development applications for areas around transit stations, and when planning

improvements that cross jurisdictional lines.

Swanson explained that the recent study supports regional priorities established last year by the TPB. “The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan emphasized the need to squeeze capacity out of the existing transit system,” Swanson said. “And it focused on enhancing local circulation in Activity Centers, in part by improving pedestrian and bicycle connections. These types of improvements help with both of those priorities.”



**TCSF station study areas.**

In all, the TPB study identified 25 underutilized Metro, MARC, and VRE stations throughout the region and approximately 3,000 potential projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to those stations. The projects, most of which are already part of existing local plans, include new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, bike parking, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage.

Thanks to the study, the projects are all now included in a detailed database and online interactive map. The TPB envisions the database and map being useful to local planners and decisionmakers when they

In a similar study, Metro officials are working to identify key pedestrian and bicycle improvements near the system’s 91 stations that have the potential to improve access and boost ridership and revenue.

Metro’s Kristin Haldeman briefed the TPB at its recent meeting. She explained that the agency’s approach is to expand the half-mile “walkshed” around stations by making strategic sidewalk and other connections.

Haldeman showed an example of the Southern Avenue station on Metro’s Green

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## ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

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Line and a potential new sidewalk connection there that could make it possible for as many as 600 more households to reach the Metro station within a half-mile walk. She said that the agency expects, based on recent research it conducted, to see as many as 400 more peak period trips at the Southern Avenue station each day thanks to the new connection. She said the boost in ridership at that location could yield as much as \$300,000 a year in new revenue for the agency.

Board members applauded the recent work. Jay Fisette, who represents Arlington County on the Board, said, "Too often we focus on billion-dollar projects. This study shows that sometimes a little money can go a long way to improving mobility and accessibility in our region."

The next step for the recent efforts is to finish studying all 91 Metro station areas and develop a tool for prioritizing those pedestrian and bicycle projects with the greatest potential to boost ridership at underutilized stations. ♦

## OTHER MAY AGENDA ITEM

The TPB's May 20 meeting also included the following item:

- Status Report on the Development of a Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects ♦



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## GREENHOUSE GAS

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regions have done in this regard," he said.

Board member Jay Fisette said he thought it was an important matter for the group to discuss.

"We have experience with emissions limits for air pollutants, but nothing so far from the federal government for greenhouse gases. So, what is the contribution from transportation and land-use? Do we set a limit? It's incumbent upon this group to directly answer these questions," Fisette said. ♦

## UPCOMING JUNE AGENDA ITEMS

The June 17 TPB meeting is expected to include the following items:

- Briefing on the Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Washington, DC-VA-MD Transportation Management Area
- Briefing on the COG State of the Region Infrastructure Report
- Status on the Development of a Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects
- Briefing on Responsibilities and Activities of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority ♦

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are at COG unless otherwise indicated. If you are in need of special assistance to participate in meetings, please call (202) 962-3315 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Bicycle racks are located in the parking garage at 777 North Capitol St., NE (Enter from First St., NE).

## June 2015

- 5 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 5 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 9 Annual Transit Forum (11 am)
- 11 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 16 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 16 Regional TDM Marketing Group Meeting (noon)
- 17 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 23 Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (noon)
- 24 Regional Taxicab Regulators (1 pm)
- 30 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards (8:30 am)

## July 2015

- 8 Car Free Day Steering Committee (11:30 am)
- 10 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 10 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 16 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 17 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 21 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 21 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 22 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 30 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

## August 2015

- 25 Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (noon)

Dates and times subject to change.

Please visit our website at

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This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Bryan Hayes at (202) 962-3273 or [bhayes@mwkog.org](mailto:bhayes@mwkog.org), or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Please allow seven working days for preparation of material.

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