

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: John Swanson, Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Planning Session on October 15 Regarding Public Outreach for the 2010 CLRP

DATE: October 21, 2009

On October 15, TPB staff convened an informal planning session with stakeholders to solicit input on how to conduct outreach for this year's update to the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). This meeting was conducted in conjunction with the normal monthly meeting of the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee.

### **Background: Preliminary Strategy for 2010 Outreach**

For the 2010 Constrained Long-Range Plan, TPB staff is planning to conduct a multi-faceted outreach program promoting a deliberative regional discussion about challenges and potential solutions. These outreach activities will incorporate concepts, policies and projects examined in the TPB's scenario analysis. The aim of this outreach will be to conduct an integrated discussion about both regional aspirations and the realities of the CLRP process. The final plan document will articulate public attitudes about key problems and potential solutions in a manner that is compelling and useful for decision makers.

#### ***What will we discuss in this year's outreach?***

Outreach in FY2010 will look at the changing context for transportation planning, both in our region and across the nation. Discussion will include:

- Continuing regional challenges, particularly the transportation funding shortfall and land-use issues identified in scenario study outreach.
- The changing context of transportation planning, including the growing public awareness of climate change, proposed changes to federal transportation funding structures and other cross-cutting challenges such as affordable housing.

#### ***How will we conduct outreach?***

- Outreach will include a wide range of techniques for soliciting public input from a variety of different constituencies. We will likely use familiar methods, such as public meetings, workshops and web-based tools. Unlike recent outreach efforts, however, we will also seek out input from average citizens who are not normally engaged in our process. Techniques may include public opinion surveys, focus groups and innovative methods for gathering input from representative segments of the population.

- Public involvement activities will be woven into the entire plan development process, beginning this fall and finishing in June. The strategy will be divided into two phases:
  - November-February: Discussion of regional problems and potential solutions. This phase will be before the approval of project submissions for air quality analysis.
  - February- June: Discussion of the draft CLRP, with a focus on the mismatch between needs and funding realities.

### **The Planning Session on October 15**

The event on October 15 provided a chance to inform stakeholders about the process we intend to conduct this year and an opportunity to hear their ideas about how it should be structured. Participants included members of the TPB CAC, along with representatives from interest groups and individual citizens from across the region. Representatives of transportation implementing agencies were also presented and contributed to the discussion. The session was designed to tap into the expertise of individuals who are already involved in our process. Peter Shapiro, former TPB chair, facilitated the meeting. The discussion focused on the following two agenda topics: 1) What's the regional big-picture and 2) how should we be reaching out?

Through a process of brainstorming and discussion, participants provided input on a variety of public involvement techniques—ranging from low-tech publications and briefings to high-tech electronic town hall meetings and web-based outreach methods. We discussed how these techniques might relate to three types of constituencies: “Involved” citizens who are already active in the TPB process; “Informed” people who may be active at the local level, but are not necessarily aware of regional planning at COG, and the “interested” public who have an interest in transportation problem-solving because they use the system on a regular basis, but do not understand the details of planning or decision-making.

The discussion included the following interesting points:

- Participants emphasized the importance of creating enthusiasm and excitement around public outreach activities.
- Participants also emphasized the need for a public education component.
- Despite the fact that most participants on October 15 have long been involved in the TPB process, it was noteworthy that for the most part, they approached the brainstorming session with an open-minded, non-cynical attitude. The atmosphere of the meeting was encouraging.
- The purpose of getting public input is not immediately obvious because the feedback we receive this year is not likely to affect the 2010 CLRP, although it may have an impact on future plans. The “why are we doing this?” question requires additional thought.

### **Next steps**

In the coming weeks, staff will lay out a draft strategy for outreach and identify staffing needs and consultant support that will be needed to conduct public involvement activities during the remainder of this fiscal year.

**Participants**  
**October 15, 2009**

Larry Martin	CAC
Lynn Shanton	CAC
Richard Parsons	CAC
Bill Klenke	CAC
Maureen Budetti	CAC
Harold Foster	CAC
Allen Muchnick	CAC
Bob Chase	Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Lew Pratsch	US Department of Energy
William Washburn	MNCPPC-Prince George's
Kanti Srikanth	VDOT
Dial Keju	Citizen
Bob Owolabi	Fairfax County DOT
Howard Benn	Montgomery County Transit
Tom Harrington	WMATA
Sandra Jackson	FHWA
Jody McCulogan	Baltimore Metro
Mark Rawlings	DDOT
Eric Stults	DDOT
Lyn Erickson	MDOT
Roger Diedrich	Sierra Club
Harry Sanders	Purple Line Now
Peter Shapiro	meeting facilitator
Jerry Miller	COG/TPB
Darren Smith	COG/TPB
Sarah Crawford	COG/TPB
Deborah Bilek	COG/TPB
Andrew Austin	COG/TPB
Rex Hodgson	COG/TPB
Michael Farrell	COG/TPB
John Swanson	COG/TPB

