

**TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)  
2013 End-of-Year Report**

**Stephen Still, 2013 CAC Chair**

For the last 20+ years, the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB's) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been providing region-oriented, citizen advice to the TPB and has been promoting public involvement in the regional transportation planning process. As required by the TPB's Participation Plan, this report summarizes the committee's activities in 2013.

The 2013 CAC was a spirited group with a diversity of expertise and experience. Members ranged from multi-year CAC veterans, including Allen Muchnick who has been on the CAC almost from the beginning, to some more youthful voices. Many CAC members have real-world transportation planning expertise, or are otherwise engaged in important regional issues.

2013 was also a challenging year with the sudden passing of Ronald Kirby, COG's Director of Transportation Planning. The CAC was deeply moved by the tragedy but resolved to carry on its business to honor Ron. The CAC passed a resolution in the form of a signed document that is intended for both COG staff and Ron's family.

Specific business initiatives of the CAC this year include:

**Review and Endorsement of WMATA's Momentum Strategic Plan**

Mr. Shyam Kannan, Managing Director at WMATA's Office of Planning, presented an overview of Momentum, WMATA's Strategic Plan. The briefing discussed the plan including its vision, mission, goals and strategies. Key elements related to safety, customer service, regional mobility, and financial stability. Among the points:

- Confirmation of the value that Metro brings to the region: Allow 18% of the region's commuting trips to be made by transit – and over 43% in the system's core. Without Metro, congestion would increase 25% and thousands of lane miles of new roads would be required
- Funding requirements to meet goals: Funding requirements to implement that plan are significant and by no means assured. \$1 billion per year is required just to maintain the existing system. Another \$500m per annum is required to expand the core, and another \$740m per annum is required to deliver the system required by 2040.

In general, the CAC endorsed the tenets of the plan and believed it captures many of the important elements that provide direction for WMATA's future. The CAC offered the following comments and suggestions:

- Funding: The CAC agrees that any realistic plan needs to identify funding requirements. It is essential to explain the specific actions that will be delivered with each increment of spending so that a clear connection can be made between benefit and cost.

- **Connectivity:** Metro does not stand alone. To be an effective regional mobility tool, the system must be connected throughout the region, not only within the Metro system, but also across all modes including pedestrian, bicycle, bus, commuter rail, automobile, and others. Significant coordination is required with other regional planning entities to integrate Metro efficiently with all other systems.
- **Core Metrorail Capacity:** Deficiencies in the core have already reached a critical stage, and will only get worse. Bold action is required including maximizing train capacity, re-designing stations, and implementing broader steps for infrastructure expansion.
- **Development:** As pointed out in the Momentum materials, land around Metrorail stations generates \$3.1 billion annually in property tax revenue to local jurisdictions. In addition to modernizing the physical infrastructure of Metro, WMATA should adopt a refined set of policies concerning station development to capture more of this value to support the transit system that created it. This could be in-house or through public-private partnerships.
- **Use of Advanced Technology:** Ease of fare collection, timing of next bus, and other customer conveniences can be enhanced through the integration of new technology. WMATA should continue to invest in leading solutions seeking to meet or exceed best practice in the US and around the globe.

We asked the Metro Board to move forward boldly. Steps outlined in Momentum are good first steps, but forceful action is required.

### **Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)**

The RTPP was a major effort of the CAC this year. Besides lengthy discussions during regular meetings, the CAC held a special meeting to analyze the RTPP during its usual August recess. CAC members participated in various RTPP workshops held by the TPB, including the Economy Forward event on September 27. The CAC wrote three reports presenting its comments on various drafts. The CAC Chair presented various comments before the TPB in its meetings.

Throughout the process, CAC comments were considered and often incorporated into versions of the RTPP. In general, the CAC endorsed the TPB Final Report that was approved by the TPB Board in January 2014. In its final set of comments, the CAC offered this advice, some of which still needs to be addressed in 2014 and beyond.

- Implementation needs to be specific, actionable, and measurable, or the RTPP will be limited to being an interesting policy document.
- The RTPP clearly makes a linkage to the Constrained Long Range Plan (CRLP) as the primary vehicle for implementation. The challenge, as the Plan freely admits, is that the TPB has limited influence on what projects are put forward in the CRLP to meet the priorities. Therefore, it is critical that specific direction be given to the local jurisdictions on how they can put forward projects and funding that best serve the RTPP.

- The CLRP “Call for Projects” document that the TPB provides to the jurisdictions should be strengthened. A project attributes “scorecard” needs to be expanded to indicate how each project advances the priorities outlined in the RTPP.
- Inclusion of measurement criteria: A framework should be developed for measuring success. At minimum this needs to include a report from the jurisdictions on how they have advanced the RTPP in the last year. In addition, TPB staff should design a means to track success against the priorities, and issue a summary report that highlights in qualitative and quantitative terms how the RTPP advanced.
- Allow for more frequent revisions of the RTPP: We would expect that the first year will yield significant learnings, and a revision should be contemplated in the 2015 timeframe, at least with respect to refined strategies implementation steps.

The RTPP should be considered a living, dynamic document that should be updated and made more specific over time.

### **Activity Center Strategic Investment Plan**

The CAC expressed enthusiastic support for this planning activity. Various briefings were provided by staff over the year, and the CAC was active in providing feedback.

The link between land use and transportation is critical and the CAC commended staff for capturing this essential planning link. CAC offered the following points:

- *Support for the diversity of Activity Center types in the draft plan.* The CAC appreciated that the plan identified a variety of types of activity centers, and focused on making each of these places the best it could be. “All activity centers can’t and shouldn’t look like Tysons,” said one member.
- *Investments that the plan will identify.* The CAC asked that the plan be specific in the types of funding and investment available to be used. These should include both private and public sources.
- *How is this work on Activity Centers integrated with other planning activities at COG and the TPB?* The CAC asked that the Activity Center Plan be a central theme in the RTPP. Staff took these comments seriously; activity centers have a prominent place in the RTPP recommended strategies.
- *Discussion regarding affordability and equity.* The CAC expressed appreciation that the plan was dealing directly with gentrification and was not simply seeking to capitalize upon market potential. In particular, members spoke about the need to preserve and expand affordable housing in activity centers.

The CAC asks that work on activity centers continue to be a focus of regional planning activities.

## **Providing Input on Development of Transportation Information Hub**

The CAC was briefed on various efforts in the last year to strengthen COG's information available through its web sites. The CAC was briefed by staff and consultants on improved transportation-oriented content on COG's web site. The CAC offered many constructive comments regarding design and ability to make this an efficient communication and document repository site.

In addition, the CAC very much supported the development of TPB's Transportation Planning Information Hub. This site provides a one-stop shop for understanding the transportation process at state, local and regional levels, as well as content on each jurisdiction's significant plans and projects.

The complexity of transportation planning in our region is daunting for many citizens and effective communication through these sites will be helpful as an outreach vehicle.

## **Other Focus Areas**

Many other topics were addressed during the year. Some notable elements include:

- **Bus-on-Shoulder Task Force:** Other major metropolitan areas have effectively used this strategy to speed transit passengers through integrated bus networks. The CAC endorsed this work and hopes that various projects can be considered for implementation in the upcoming CLRP/TIPs.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC):** The CAC was briefed on projects recommended for funding. The CAC endorses the principles of providing efficient connectivity to transportation networks particularly with regard to expanded pedestrian and bicycle access.
- **Green Streets:** The CAC was a strong advocate of a Complete Streets policy and recommended that a Green Streets policy follow a similar framework with regard to compliance across jurisdictions and measurement of results.
- **Freight transportation:** Karin Foster provided an excellent briefing on the challenges of freight transportation passing through, and within our region. The CAC was saddened to learn of Karin's passing this year and commends the great work she did on behalf of the TPB and the CAC.

The CAC received many other briefings during the year, many of which were requested and initiated by the CAC.

## **Closing Comments**

The CAC is clearly a strong and committed body. Its members have put forth great effort in formulating important new initiatives for the region. Many significant projects including the RTPP and Complete Streets were first conceived and pushed by the CAC.

The committee's work will forge exciting new ground in influencing the region's transportation direction throughout 2014 and into the coming years.