

REMEMBERING MY YEARS AT COG/TPB ON TPB'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

By George V. Wickstrom, P.E.

In 1966, I was offered the job as Director of Transportation Planning for TPB by Walter Scheiber, COG's Executive Director. At the time, I was heading the Newcastle County Transportation Study (Wilmington, DE Area). Unfortunately, I could not leave Delaware until the data collected was analyzed and the forecasts of future travel completed. Later that year, I accepted the job of Deputy Director of Transportation Planning at TPB under Al Grant. I worked for Al until he retired.

In 1968, we undertook a large scale home interview survey (30,000 household throughout the region), a truck and taxi survey and an external roadside interview survey of vehicles entering the region. I had directed a similar large scale survey in the Philadelphia area as Deputy Director of the Penn Jersey Transportation Study prior to Delaware. At that time, Metro construction was just getting started, I-95 was stopped at the Beltway and I-270 was a 4 lane freeway (some of it still is!).

The next years were spent summarizing the data, building travel forecasting models and testing and evaluating alternative transit and highway systems. Both a regional short-range program and a long-range plan were developed and approved by the TPB. That Plan and Program has been continuously updated by the Board.

We had a great staff. Bill Mann on models. Tony Giardini on data summarization. Ron Sarros on transit. Alan Pisarski as Head of Data Collection (Alan is now a well-known consultant).

After this, I changed jobs at COG. After a brief stint as Director of Program Coordination for COG, I returned to the transportation staff as Manager of Technical Services, a job I held from then on.

My favorite part of the job as Manager of Technical Services was directing studies of major projects such as Rt. 7, I-66 and Beltway improvements, as well as Metrorail extensions in Maryland and Virginia. I enjoyed working with TPB members and state and local staff. Jim Hogan and others were involved. Bob Griffiths took over after I retired from COG/TPB in 1992.

I also had the pleasure of working for Ron Kirby. Both he and Al Grant were great people to work for and led TPB in the right direction over the years. They will not be forgotten by anyone who knew them. It is their almost 50 years of joint service that we should also remember and celebrate.

