

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee June 16, 2004 Allen Muchnick, Vice Chair

The TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee met on June 10. CAC Vice Chair Allen Muchnick served as chair. The meeting focused on land use activities at COG, the CAC's public outreach meetings for this fall, and the system for posting and accessing public comments on the COG/TPB website.

Land Use Planning Activities at COG

Diana Farina and Greg Goodwin of the COG staff provided an overview of recent activities at COG related to land use. The committee viewed the COG video on smart growth, which was recently released, and discussed the activity centers maps, which were developed and released in 2002.

Member questions and comments included the following:

- ***What is the meaning and use of being designated an activity center?*** Mr. Goodwin explained that the activity centers project grew out of the TPB's Vision, which sought to strengthen transportation/land use coordination. The Vision called for the development of a "composite general land use and transportation map of the region." Ron Kirby said the influence of the activity centers on transportation investment was very indirect. But he said the activity centers maps were nonetheless important. He emphasized that the COG jurisdictions took the development of the maps very seriously and since their development, they have continued to receive attention in planning activities across the region. He further noted that the maps form a basis for future efforts at COG, including the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.
- ***How are the activity centers related to the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study?*** Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Kirby explained that the activity centers are integral to the development of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. Several of the scenarios that will be analyzed will look at increasing jobs and/or housing in activity centers and clusters.
- ***How is the smart growth video being distributed?*** After viewing the smart growth video, CAC members agreed it was well produced and interesting. Ms. Farina said the Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC) was being asked to get the video on the agendas on local governments board meetings throughout the region. One CAC member suggested using the D.C. Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) to distribute the video. Members suggested the video should be made available in VHS format, in addition to CDs. Members who have suggestions about video distribution should contact Diana Farina at dfarina@mwkog.org.

- ***What realistically might be the transportation effects of smart growth policies?*** A member said that although smart growth policies might make the existing transportation system work better, these policies will not eliminate needs for new transportation capacity. Other members disagreed, saying smart growth policies could reduce the need for new capacity, particularly for long-term demands, including proposals such as a third beltway.

CAC Outreach Meetings for Fall 2004

Last month, the CAC agreed that the public meetings for the remainder of 2004 would focus on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. This month, the committee continued to discuss how to develop these meetings.

Comments included the following points:

- ***The presentation's approach.*** A presentation needs to be developed that will “stir people’s blood.” A member noted that the land use scenarios— such as one that would dramatically increase the population of the District of Columbia—could lend themselves to compelling graphics and illustrations.
- ***Scheduling.*** After the first results of the study are presented to the TPB in July, staff can develop a draft presentation that can be presented to the CAC in September. This would mean that three meetings would be planned for October and early November. If the meetings go well, the same presentation and format might be used for additional meetings in 2005.
- ***Purpose and outcome.*** The main purpose of the meetings will be to share information of the effects of alternative scenarios. If citizens are supportive of particular scenarios, they should be encouraged to work with their public officials to make necessary policy changes. (The meetings should emphasize that the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study is looking at the effects of scenarios; it is *not* looking at the policies need to achieve those scenarios. For example, the “Region Undivided” scenario will look at the effects of more jobs/housing on the eastern side of the region, not how to get jobs and housing in the east.)
- ***Partnerships.*** Members suggested working with other organizations to develop and plan the meetings. Mr. Kirby emphasized the importance of getting members of the COG Planning Directors Committee involved.

Discussion of the TPB Website Postings of Public Comment

As part of the amendment process for the CLRP earlier this year, the TPB received more than 2,500 written comments on the Intercounty Connector. For the first time, TPB staff posted all public comments on the COG website.

Some observers, including CAC members, have noted that the arrangement of the comments on the website made it difficult to sort through them and to easily locate certain comments. At the meeting on June 10, the CAC discussed methods for improving the process of sharing public comments, especially during periods of high volume. Andrew Austin, the TPB's webmaster, joined the conversation.

After discussing various alternatives, the CAC proposed the following improvement for the TPB website:

- The COG/TPB website should be enhanced so that comments that are entered directly into a public comment form on the site can be indexed. This will mean that users will be able to see various indexes for these comments, broken out according to name, organization, jurisdiction, and position on key issues (pro/con/other).
- Staff will investigate the possibility of permitting people who are submitting comments via the website to attach an official comment in a pdf or Word format.
- Comments that are not received through the website, including e-mails, letters, faxes, etc., will still be posted as pdf documents according to date received.

CAC members suggested that TPB staff in the future might consider setting up some type of discussion forum on the web. Another member said that more scientific surveys should be performed to get a fuller sense of public opinion.

ATTENDANCE **CAC Meeting, June 10, 2004**

Members in Attendance

1. Allen Muchnick, Vice Chair, VA
2. Steve Cerny, VA
3. Lee Schoenecker, DC
4. Steve Cafilisch, MD
5. Don Edwards, DC
6. Michael LaJuene, VA
7. Nathaniel Bryant, MD
8. Bob Chase, VA

5. Stewart Schwartz, VA
6. Emmet Tydings, MD
7. Merle Van Horne DC

Alternates in Attendance

Alphonso Coles, DC
Larry Martin, DC

Members Not in Attendance

1. Ephrem Asebe, MD
2. Harold Foster, DC
3. Mark Friis, MD
4. Dennis Jaffe, Chair, DC

Staff/Others

Diana Farina, COG/HSPPS
Greg Goodwin, COG/HSPPS
Andrew Austin, COG/DTP
Ron Kirby, COG/DTP
John Swanson, COG/DTP