

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

## **Item #5**

### **MEMORANDUM**

**May 13, 2010**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board

**FROM:** Ronald F. Kirby  
Director, Department of  
Transportation Planning

**RE:** Letters Sent/Received Since the April 21<sup>st</sup> TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the April 21<sup>st</sup> TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the May 19<sup>th</sup> TPB agenda.

Attachments



# City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive  
Bowie, Maryland 20715

May 4, 2010

The Honorable David Snyder, Chair  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. --Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Amendment to Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)

Dear Chair Snyder:

At your April 21, 2010 meeting, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) reviewed the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) for FY 2011-2016, which is derived from the transportation priorities from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia for Federal funding, and which must be approved by the TPB as part of the Federal funding process. The projects listed usually mirror the projects in the State's Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP).

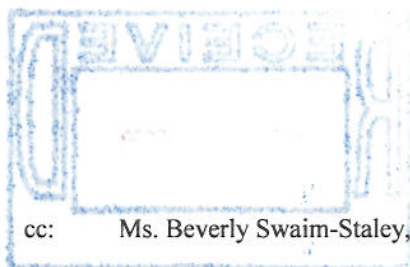
Because of funding issues, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is now proposing to delay or remove nine (9) projects from the CLRP, including the US 301 improvements from US 50 to Mount Oak Road and put the US 301 project into the "Study" category (which provides no estimated funding or timeframe for the work). The City Council would like to inform you that after more than five (5) years of study and investigation, the Project Planning phase of the project was concluded in 2007 with a unanimously supported alternate, "Alternative 2 with Roundabouts", which subsequently received Federal Highway Administration approval. Given its importance to the regional traffic circulation system, this project was designated as the first breakout project for the US 301 Corridor in Maryland. As such, it is deserving of priority status and should not be dropped from the CLRP, although we acknowledge that there is limited or no funding for engineering, right-of-way or construction.

Last year, the City Council reluctantly agreed to endorse the temporary downgrading of improvements to MD 3, just north of the US 301 corridor, to the CLRP Illustrative List as a "Study" in order for funding to be reserved for the Purple Line. We encourage you to not accept the recommendation of MDOT regarding the very important US 301 project and ask that you continue to include it in the CLRP.

We thank you for your kind consideration of the City's request.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council  
G. Frederick Robinson  
Mayor



cc: Ms. Beverly Swaim-Staley, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation



# City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive  
Bowie, Maryland 20715

May 4, 2010

The Honorable Beverly Swaim-Staley, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: FY 2011-2016 Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Transportation Planning Board

Dear Secretary Swaim-Staley:

The Bowie City Council strongly objects to the Department of Transportation's recommendation to defer the US 301 improvement project and amend it out of the FY 2011-2016 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). We were also very dismayed to find out that MDOT did not consult or inform City staff about this recommendation.

The projects listed in the CLRP usually mirror the projects in the State's Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP). However, because of funding issues, your Department is now proposing that the long-awaited US 301 improvements, from US 50 to Mount Oak Road, be included among nine (9) projects targeted for delay or removal from the CLRP. As proposed, the US 301 project will be put into the "Study" category (which provides no estimated funding or timeframe for the work).

The City Council wishes to remind you that after more than five (5) tortuous years of study and investigation, the Project Planning phase of the project was finally concluded in 2007 with a unanimously supported alternate, "Alternative 2 with Roundabouts", which subsequently received Federal Highway Administration approval. Given its importance to the regional traffic circulation system, this project has always been designated as the first breakout project for the US 301 Corridor in Maryland. As such, it is deserving of priority status and should not be dropped from the CLRP.

Last year, the City Council reluctantly agreed to endorse the temporary downgrading of improvements to MD 3, just north of the US 301 corridor, to the CLRP Illustrative List as a "Study" in order for funding to be reserved for the Purple Line. The much needed MD 3 project also has fallen victim to over 10 years of delay and inaction. The City Council is anxious and worried to see the hard work and good intentions of many citizens who served on project planning committees essentially being cast aside, if these crucial projects are suspended indefinitely.

In a June 2009 letter supporting the temporary deferral of the MD 3 project last year, the City Council requested your cooperation in moving ahead with funding for several other important, albeit smaller and less expensive projects, in lieu of the MD 3 project, including:

Letter to Transportation Secretary Swaim-Staley re: CLRP Amendment

- (1) the MD 564 T-intersection project at Chestnut Avenue north of the bridge over Amtrak in Old Town Bowie. The Maryland State Highway Administration is familiar with this dangerous intersection near the Town Green, which the State agreed many years ago to realign and reconstruct under the Neighborhood Conservation Program. Our current cost estimate is approximately \$2 million.
- (2) the MD 197/Evergreen Parkway intersection upgrade, including a sidewalk retrofit between Evergreen Parkway and Mitchellville Road. This project, which lies in the heart of the Bowie New Town Center, has been partially designed by the District 3 office and is awaiting funding. The intersection was the scene of an unfortunate pedestrian fatality.
- (3) the MD 197 median traffic calming project, between MD 450 and Rockledge Drive, including 3,000 linear feet of landscaped median. SHA's Highway Design Division created a concept plan working with the community several years ago under the Neighborhood Conservation Program. Speeding and traffic accidents continue to be a serious concern along this road.
- (4) the MD 978 (Hall Road) bridge over Collington Branch reconstruction. A Roadway Safety Audit conducted by SHA in 2008 revealed numerous deficiencies on Hall Road, including the need to replace the existing narrow, dilapidated bridge with a new, wider structure similar to the nearby Mount Oak Road bridge over the Collington Branch recently completed by Prince George's County. Construction of a new County library has begun on Hall Road and safe pedestrian access must be assured.

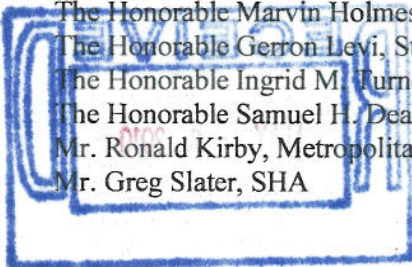
We do not recall receiving a response from you about the possibility of MDOT funding these projects. In conclusion, we encourage you to reverse the stand of MDOT regarding the very important US 301 project and ask that you recommend its continued inclusion in the CLRP. Thank you for your serious consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,



Bowie City Council  
G. Frederick Robinson  
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, State Senator  
The Honorable James Hubbard, State Delegate  
The Honorable Marvin Holmes, State Delegate  
The Honorable Gerron Levi, State Delegate  
The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner, County Council Member  
The Honorable Samuel H. Dean, County Council Member  
Mr. Ronald Kirby, Metropolitan Washington COG  
Mr. Greg Slater, SHA



# **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board**

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

April 30, 2010

Ms. Melissa Barlow  
Federal Transit Administration  
D.C. Metro Office  
1990 K Street, NW  
Suite #510  
Washington, DC 20006-1103

Ms. Sandra Jackson  
Federal Highway Administration  
D.C. Division Office  
1990 K Street, NW  
Suite #510  
Washington, DC 20006-1103

RE: Response to Preliminary Observations Reported At the April 21, 2010 TPB meeting

Dear Ms. Barlow and Ms. Jackson:

Thank you for your work to prepare for and conduct the U.S. Department of Transportation Planning Certification Review of the TPB's transportation planning process on April 15, 19, 20, 22 and the special travel demand model meeting on April 29. The TPB and the staff welcome the opportunity to discuss the regional planning process with our Federal partners and welcome any feedback on areas we can improve on.

The following three preliminary observations from the Federal Team were reported to the TPB by Mr. Lawson, FHWA Administrator for the D.C. Division, on April 21, 2010:

- 1) The TPB should consider ways to increase transparency of financial planning and fiscal constraint through improved documentation to make analysis and results more comprehensible to the public;
- 2) The Federal Team expressed concern about the extensive reliance on the website and the need for specific outreach efforts to reach and engage the general public; and
- 3) The MPO should take a greater role in outreach to transit operators and long-range planning, addressing limited capacity, revenues, and decreasing ridership.

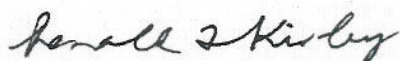
Recognizing that the TPB process is complex and TPB staff may not have clearly conveyed some information in the two-day on-site visit, we are providing you and the Federal Team some additional information and clarification regarding these preliminary observations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or clarifications on the attached information, the Responses to 2010 Certification Review Questions document submitted to you on

March 24, or if we can provide more clarification to the information provided at the numerous meetings held for the review.

We look forward to our continued work together on critical transportation issues in the metropolitan Washington region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald F. Kirby".

Ronald F. Kirby  
Director, Department of Transportation Planning

## ATTACHMENT:

### Additional Information Regarding Preliminary Observations Reported to the TPB on April 21, 2010

**Observation 1:** The TPB should consider ways to increase transparency of financial planning and fiscal constraint through improved documentation to make analysis and results more comprehensible to the public.

During the regular financial analysis process that occurs every four years each project's cost is reviewed by the submitting agency, TPB staff, and an independent consultant with expertise in transportation finance and economic analysis. These costs are compared against expected revenues to ensure that the CLRP is financially constrained and realistic.

Between each four-year financial plan update, each agency is asked to review and update the costs for their projects. The CLRP database reflects when each record was last updated. Records that have not been updated in the past year are flagged by TPB staff and forwarded to the submitting agency for their review to ensure the data is accurate and up to date.

When new projects are submitted for inclusion in the CLRP, agencies are required to complete a project description form that includes the cost of the project and proposed funding sources. These are reviewed by TPB staff. If the project represents a significant new capital cost, the implementing agency is asked to submit a more detailed financial plan to support the cost estimate and proposed funding sources. The costs and funding are reviewed by TPB staff and the TPB's Technical Committee. To a large degree the TPB is dependent upon the cost estimates submitted by the implementing agency since staff does not have the resources to independently audit this information.

The Financial Plan is defined as a distinct element of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), as documented on the CLRP website (<http://www.mwcog.org/clrp/elements/financial.asp>). A summary of the financial plan is presented there. Using graphs and charts, the summary shows where the funding is coming from and where it's going. It shows that more and more funds are needed just to maintain the existing system and that the funding for new projects is shrinking.

The Region magazine, the TPB's annual report, continually emphasizes the results of financial planning and the need to address the funding challenges that the region faces. The 2009 Region magazine provides an excellent summary of the efforts that the TPB has made to inform and educate the public about the fiscal constraints and the local, regional, state, and federal funding challenges facing our transportation system. See <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/publications/zFZeVg20090522125642.pdf#page=31>.

**Observation 2: The Federal Team expressed concern about the extensive reliance on the website and the need for specific outreach efforts to reach and engage the general public.**

TPB staff would like to clarify that while the TPB website, along with electronic communications and social networking platforms, has become the primary means of communicating information to the public and soliciting input, staff continues to utilize traditional communication forms to reach members of the public, particularly at key junctures in the planning process and when certain TPB activities may be of special interest to the general public or to certain segments of the population. The TPB maintains a database of 1,200 contacts that receive notification via postcard mailings and/or the monthly TPB Newsletter of TPB public events, in addition to those that receive TPB emails or are informed via the website and other media. Notice is also published in the region's newspaper of record, *The Washington Post*, as well as *El Pregonero* which serves the area's Hispanic community. Events for which such notice is provided include the approval of the submissions for the update of the CLRP, the approval of the CLRP and TIP, and semi-annual public forums on the development of the region's CLRP and TIP.

With regard to efforts to reach out to the general public, decision-making on transportation priorities and project selection occurs predominantly at the state and local levels<sup>1</sup> because of the structure of funding allocations. Despite this constraint, the TPB has found innovative and novel ways to engage members of the public and facilitate a public dialogue about regional transportation issues, and serve as a positive example for the region's transportation implementing agencies as they conduct their own planning- and project-related public involvement.

TPB Staff held an interactive dialogue with members of the public during development of the TPB Participation Plan, which was adopted in December 2007<sup>2</sup>. The central concept of the Participation Plan is that there are three constituencies for the TPB, each having a different level of knowledge and familiarity with the TPB and the transportation decision-making process:

- The **Involved** public consists of a relatively small group of people who are familiar with the TPB and participate in its processes through professional roles, membership on a TPB committee, or as a commenter on TPB plans or at meetings.
- The **Informed** public consists of people who are engaged in civic issues and have a general understanding of transportation issues – these people are often referred to as “community leaders” by virtue their status as information conduits to larger citizen groups.
- the **Interested** public is the largest group, consisting of everyone who has an interest in transportation in the region simply by the role it plays in their daily lives.

The TPB Participation Plan is based upon the fundamental premise that in order to most effectively use its resources the TPB must tailor its outreach to these three different groups.

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<sup>1</sup> As described in response R10 in the “Responses to 2010 Certification Review Questions” submitted to FHWA and FTA on March 24, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See response R9.



Information about the more arcane and complex aspects of the region's transportation planning process, such as the development of the TIP, approval of the Unified Planning Work Program, and the federal certification review process, while readily and easily available to all, is targeted to the *"Involved"* public.

The TPB Community Leadership Institute is targeted to the *"Informed"* public.<sup>3</sup> It has allowed the TPB to educate citizens on regional transportation planning issues, and most importantly, how transportation decisions are made in this complex region. Through role-playing activities, participants learn the roles of various agency players and the ways in which citizens can most effectively gain information about and influence transportation plans and projects. CLI also establishes the TPB as a resource for community leaders for getting information and finding out whom to contact with a project-related question. Because the CLI participants are opinion leaders in their communities with extensive networks of communication, CLI also enables the TPB to efficiently disseminate this key information.

Periodically, the TPB has also sought to engage the *"Interested"* public in a constructive dialogue about regional transportation issues. Development of the TPB Vision in 1998 included extensive public outreach. More recently, in 2006 and 2007 TPB staff conducted nearly 40 presentations at various venues throughout the region, sharing the results of the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study and gathering feedback about the study and regional transportation challenges through activities and discussions. Preparation for many of these events included working with local partners to advertise and promote the event, and in many cases audiences were quite large and included citizens who had not previously been engaged in regional transportation issues or even heard of the TPB.

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<sup>3</sup> See response R4.

**Observation 3: The MPO should take a greater role in outreach to transit operators and long-range planning, addressing limited capacity, revenues, and decreasing ridership.**

The TPB has taken a very proactive approach to involving transit operators in the long-range planning process over the last several years:

- In 2007, the TPB created the Regional Bus Subcommittee to provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the CLRP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The following transit operators are actively engaged in the bus subcommittee:

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Metrobus                        | Fairfax Connector        |
| Montgomery County Ride On       | Loudoun Commuter Transit |
| Prince George 's County The Bus | PRTC Omni Ride           |
| DC Circulator                   | MTA Commuter Bus         |
| Alexandria Dash                 | Metrorail                |
| Arlington Transit (ART)         | Virginia Railway Express |
| Falls Church George             | Maryland Commuter Rail   |
| City of Fairfax CUE             |                          |

The Regional Bus Subcommittee webpage is at:

[www.mwcog.org/committee/committee/default.asp?COMMITTEE\\_ID=215](http://www.mwcog.org/committee/committee/default.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=215)

- In 2008, the subcommittee released a *Status Report on the Bus Systems in the National Capital Region*: which provides an overview of the subcommittee's work to date, and highlights current operational issues and long-range planning needs which have been identified. The report is available at:  
[www.mwcog.org/store/item.asp?PUBLICATION\\_ID=328](http://www.mwcog.org/store/item.asp?PUBLICATION_ID=328).
- WMATA is a voting member of the TPB. The transit operators are represented on the TPB by the elected officials and/or county executives that represent the jurisdiction in which the bus system operates. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) is represented by VDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration is represented by MDOT.
- Representatives of the transit systems listed above also participate in the TPB Technical Committee, the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, the Access for All Advisory Committee and the Private Providers Task Force Annual Public Transit Forum.
- WMATA and TPB collaborate on long range planning initiatives and have worked together to address limited capacity and shrinking revenues, as demonstrated by the:
  - Development of the CLRP financial plan which is an important forum for examining the regional picture of revenues and expenses;

- Metrorail ridership constraint in the air quality conformity analysis;
- Successful Regional TIGER bus priority grant; and
- Application for a Regional Bus Stop Improvement Program under the FTA's Livability Bus grant program.

With regard to the point about "decreasing ridership", TPB staff was asked by local jurisdictional staff to respond to this statement. Some transit operators experienced a slight drop in ridership during the first part of the fiscal year which is largely attributable to the economic downturn. However, ridership is now growing and local operators anticipate that FY2010 ridership will show an increase. Metro is expecting to end the year about even with FY2009 or with a slight increase from FY2009. Table 1 below shows the ridership of transit operators in the last two years with some operators showing an increase in ridership between FY2008 and FY2009.

**Table 1: Transit Ridership in the Metropolitan Washington Region**

|                                       | <b>FY2008</b>           | <b>FY2009</b>      | <b>Change</b>     | <b>% Change</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
|                                       | <b>Annual Ridership</b> |                    |                   |                 |
| <b>Alexandria DASH</b>                | 3,978,773               | 4,006,825          | 28,052            | 0.7%            |
| <b>Arlington ART</b>                  | 1,225,427               | 1,428,827          | 203,400           | 16.6%           |
| <b>Circulator</b>                     | 2,798,418               | 4,001,264          | 1,202,846         | 43.0%           |
| <b>City of Fairfax CUE</b>            | 1,047,346               | 1,031,659          | -15,687           | -1.5%           |
| <b>Fairfax Connector</b>              | 9,810,228               | 9,576,635          | -233,593          | -2.4%           |
| <b>Frederick TransIT</b>              | 664,732                 | 709,015            | 44,283            | 6.7%            |
| <b>Loudoun County Transit</b>         | 777,273                 | 890,011            | 112,738           | 14.5%           |
| <b>Metrobus</b>                       | 132,795,000             | 133,800,000        | 1,005,000         | 0.8%            |
| <b>Metrorail*</b>                     | 215,315,000             | 222,900,000        | 7,585,000         | 3.5%            |
| <b>Montgomery County Ride-On</b>      | 29,673,140              | 29,627,391         | -45,749           | -0.2%           |
| <b>Prince William County OmniLink</b> | 1,008,626               | 1,025,633          | 17,007            | 1.7%            |
| <b>Prince William County OmniRide</b> | 1,840,722               | 2,146,441          | 305,719           | 16.6%           |
| <b>Prince George's County The Bus</b> | 3,389,620               | 3,510,433          | 120,813           | 3.6%            |
| <b>VRE</b>                            | 3,628,563               | 3,868,035          | 239,472           | 6.6%            |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>403,974,095</b>      | <b>414,515,344</b> | <b>10,541,249</b> | <b>2.6%</b>     |

\*Metrorail trips are linked trips.



*Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region*

May 7, 2010

District of Columbia  
Bladensburg\*  
Bowie  
College Park  
Frederick  
Frederick County  
Gaithersburg  
Greenbelt  
Montgomery County  
Prince George's County  
Rockville  
Takoma Park  
Alexandria  
Arlington County  
Fairfax  
Fairfax County  
Falls Church  
Loudoun County  
Manassas  
Manassas Park  
Prince William County

\*Adjunct member

Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
U.S Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Docket No. DOT-OST-2010-0076  
Interim Notice of Funding Availability for the Department of Transportation's  
National Infrastructure Investments under the Transportation, Housing, and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2010; and  
Request for Comments

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) are pleased to be able to offer comments on the feasibility of a potential joint solicitation for the DOT TIGER II Planning Grants and the HUD Community Challenge Grants, as proposed in the Interim Notice of Funding Availability for the TIGER II program.

COG is the regional council for the National Capital Region. As the regional association of more than 250 local, state and federal elected officials representing 21 local governments, COG hosts and supports the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO). COG also hosts a wide-range of inter-jurisdictional, multi-sector planning activities and groups that provide strong capacity to partner with HUD and other federal agencies.

COG and TPB fully support DOT and HUD in pursuing a program that "has the potential to encourage and reward more holistic planning efforts and result in better projects being built with Federal dollars". We believe that the criteria and subsequent awards in the first TIGER grant program, under which the TPB received a grant for its Priority Bus Transit application, encouraged more regional partnership, multimodal consideration, and coordination with non-transportation sectors.

We believe that this type of coordination should be expanded by DOT and HUD over the long-term to include more formal coordination between sectors and agencies. However, we do not think that a formal joining of the pending TIGER II Planning Grants and HUD Community Challenge grants is the appropriate place to begin, for two reasons:

1. The timeframe for comments, applications and awards is too short to result in the type of regional and local partnerships that will be positive and lasting. If a joint solicitation is issued on May 28, less than two months would be available for the development of a joint application, which is too short a time period for a new process requiring a level of collaboration never attempted in most regions.
2. As stated in the Interim NOFA, the two grant programs can provide funding to different applicants. The HUD grant can provide direct funding to a much wider range of entities than the DOT TIGER II program. We believe that because of the short timeframe, these differences in eligibility will need to be maintained, essentially precluding the implementation of an effective joint selection process.

Rather than develop a joint solicitation, we believe that HUD and DOT should issue separate solicitations, but reflect in the grant criteria for each program the two agencies' desire for cross-sector collaborations where feasible.

The process of building long-lasting and effective partnerships that change the way we do business should be part of a long-term strategy. In the short term, DOT and HUD can use the TIGER II Planning Grants and the Community Challenge Grants to build a knowledge base on how this new type of coordination can work by encouraging applicants to incorporate new and innovative coordination strategies into their applications.

COG and TPB would like to thank DOT for the opportunity to comment on this effort to promote cross-sector program coordination between DOT and HUD, which we strongly support.

Sincerely,



David Robertson  
Executive Director



City of Rockville  
 111 Maryland Avenue  
 Rockville, Maryland  
 20850-2364  
 www.rockvillemd.gov

Public Works  
 240-314-8500  
 TTY 240-314-8137  
 FAX 240-314-8539

Environmental Management  
 240-314-8870  
 FAX 240-314-8885

Fleet Services  
 240-314-8485  
 FAX 240-314-8499

Maintenance Operations  
 240-314-8570  
 FAX 240-314-8589

Water Treatment Plant  
 240-314-8555  
 FAX 240-314-8564

April 13, 2010

Mr. David Snyder, Chair  
 National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
 777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Suite 300  
 Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Dear Mr. Snyder:

Thank you for your letter requesting a voluntary contribution for the fiscal year 2011 Street Smart campaign. Pedestrian and bicycle safety is a high priority for the Rockville Mayor and Council and the City is committed to awareness campaigns, such as Street Smart, that provide pedestrian and bicycle safety education.

Per your request, the City agrees to contribute toward the fiscal year 2011 Street Smart campaign for the suggested donation of \$3,300.

Thank you again for you letter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 240-314-8508 or [eelshafei@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:eelshafei@rockvillemd.gov).

Sincerely,

Emad Elshafei  
 Chief, Traffic and Transportation Division

EE/CS/mbw

cc: Scott Ullery, City Manager  
 Craig L. Simoneau, Director of Public Works  
 Carrie Sanders, Transportation Planner II/Pedestrian Safety Coordinator  
 Day File

MAYOR  
 Phyllis Marcuccio

COUNCIL  
 John B. Britton  
 Piotr Gajewski  
 Bridget Donnell Newton  
 Mark Pierzchala

CITY MANAGER  
 Scott Ullery

CITY CLERK  
 Claire F. Funkhouser

CITY ATTORNEY  
 Debra Yerg Daniel



**AAA News Release**  
**5/3/2010**

**REMOVAL OF TRAFFIC LANES ON PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE FOR BIKE LANES DRAWS IRE OF MOTORISTS**

**NEW BIKE LANES COULD MAKE A BAD THING WORSE  
IN DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON, SAYS AAA**  
*Protected Bike Lane Project Would Remove Six Miles Of Traffic Lane;  
New Bike Lanes Won't Entice District Motorists Out Of Cars, AAA Poll Shows*

**WASHINGTON, D. C. (Monday, May 3, 2010)** – Pennsylvania Avenue has a new look. Over the weekend, D.C. transportation work crews converted two traffic lanes on “America’s Main Street” into bike lanes, and, as a result, city traffic could become even more congested in downtown Washington and further increase commuter frustration with insufficient road and highway capacity, warns AAA Mid-Atlantic, which is encouraging commuters and District motorists to voice their concerns about the proposal.

Bike lanes will also be built on four other major streets in the city’s busiest corridor.

“If you build it, will they come?” It is unlikely the addition of new bike lanes in Washington’s Central Business District will entice most motorists out of their cars or attract more residents to bicycling to work. That’s according to the findings of AAA Mid-Atlantic’s latest survey of District motorists.

“Given current levels of motor vehicle traffic in downtown D.C. and the depth of frustration with gridlock during daily work trips, many motorists are wondering why this plan made it to the drawing board in the first place,” cautioned John B. Townsend II, AAA Mid-Atlantic’s Manager of Public and Government Affairs.

“In the minds of many motorists and commuters this plan abounds with problems. Although they understand that a vibrant city like Washington needs to have a healthy mix of bikers, walkers, motorists and mass transit users, they think this plan is counter-intuitive.”

If given final approval, the pilot bicycle lane project would remove six miles of traffic lanes along five major thoroughfares in the city’s Central Business District, including two traffic lanes on a mile-long stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue, from the White House to the U. S. Capitol building.

In addition, one lane of automobile traffic in Northwest Washington will be removed from 9th Street, 15th Street, L Street and M Street, under the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) proposal. The 30-day public comment period for the project closes 12 days from now.

Polling shows some residents already have some misgivings about the proposal. In fact, 53 percent of District residents say bike lanes and other added bicycle perks will not make them more likely to bicycle to work on a regular basis, the 2010 AAA Transportation Poll ® shows. Even so, 20 percent of surveyed AAA members in the District said the changes would compel them to become regular bicycle commuters.

“Downtown Washington experienced the worst congestion in the region during the last decade, previous studies by local transportation planners show,” Townsend noted.

“If implemented, this plan could make things worse. Lane closures must be approached with extreme caution to avoid excessive traffic delays and the diversion of motorists into neighborhood streets, increasing cut-through traffic in peak periods.”

“What’s past is prologue,” providing an object lesson about such impacts, some

D.C. motorists and taxi drivers complain. They still point to the impact of the decision 15 years ago to close a two-block stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House that carried 29,000 vehicles a day.

As predicted, it increased traffic congestion in downtown Washington during rush hours, some critics grouse. The Secret Service closed the six lane avenue from 15th to 17th streets to motor traffic in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. Since then, increased security concerns and terror threats have prompted officials to reduce lane width and remove parking spaces around some federal buildings, observed AAA.

Each inauguration day the 1.2 mile-long stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue down from the United States Capitol building to the White House becomes the "Promenade of Presidents." It will be retrofitted with a "bicycle facility," allowing bicyclists to travel down the center median, according to DDOT. Here's a snapshot of the impacted streets and length of the proposed protected bike lanes:

- o Pennsylvania Avenue NW from 3rd Street NW to 14th Street NW (1 mile).
- o 9th Street NW from Constitution Avenue NW to K Street NW (0.7 mile).
- o 15th Street NW from Constitution Avenue NW to W Street NW (2 miles).
- o L Street from 11th Street NW to 25th Street NW (1.3 miles).
- o M Street from 15th Street NW to 29th Street NW (1 mile).

Under the pilot project, the "barrier-protected" bike lanes will be separated from vehicular traffic by either a lane of parking or buffer zone. Cyclists will still be permitted to travel in regular vehicle travel lanes in Downtown DC.

"Although bicycling is an increasingly popular way to get to work in the District, the question is whether the proposal will exacerbate the commute for the vast majority of workers in Downtown Washington, constricting already clogged traffic arterials, and causing even more delays during peak travel periods in the District's most highly developed area," the auto club spokesman said.

"Motorists are concerned that congestion will become even more pronounced because reductions in lane width generally trigger reductions in traffic flow, travel times and capacity. That's the biggest issue."

On average, 2.3 percent of District workers bike to work, according to 2008 data from DDOT. That's 7,066 bicyclists daily. In contrast, 12 percent walk to work. Even so, 39 percent of employees in the District drive to work alone, while 21 percent ride to their jobs in carpools and vanpools.

Another 40 percent use some form of mass transit, including Metrorail and Metrobus. Although advocates of bike lanes tout their safety benefits and impact on organizing the flow of traffic, some planners still debate the best approach for adding the lanes to existing roadways, commented Townsend.

The proposed bike lane project carries a price tag of \$1.2 million and is slated for completion during 2010. The regional Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has identified the "protected bike lane pilot project" as one of four "new regionally significant projects" designated for inclusion in the 2010 long-range transportation plan. The 30-day public comment period will end at midnight on Saturday, May 15, 2010.

Commuters can submit their comments to the TPB online, or by or by phone at (202) 962-3262 or TDD: (202) 962-3213. As of Spring 2010, the District boasts a total of 1,200 lane miles, including 44.7 miles of bike lanes and 56 miles of bike trails. DDOT contends it will evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the bike lane pilot project before deciding whether to make it permanent.



*AAA Mid-Atlantic advocates on behalf of its nearly four million members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. It provides a wide range of personal insurance, travel, financial and automotive services through its 50-plus retail branches, regional operations centers, and the Internet. For more information, please visit our web site at [www.AAA.com](http://www.AAA.com)*

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# USDOT: Treat Walking and Bicycling as Equal to Other Transportation Modes

*Policy Statement Calls for Full Consideration in Transportation Planning; No New Requirements*

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood has issued a new policy statement calling for full consideration of bicycling and walking in transportation planning at the state and community level. The new policy provides some recommended actions to make walking and bicycling safer and more convenient, with particular attention to transit riders and people of all ages and levels of mobility.

The policy is an expression of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) leadership's commitment to walking and bicycling, but it does not create any new requirements for transportation agencies. The policy statement highlights sections from the U.S. Code and Code of Federal Regulations that pertain to walking and bicycling.

The statement has been hailed as the strongest statement for bicycling and walking ever made by a sitting secretary of transportation. Pro-bicycling organizations and complete streets advocates have called it a national complete streets initiative.

Transportation for America (T4America), a nationwide coalition of groups and individuals focused on creating a national transportation system for the 21st century, had recently met with LaHood and presented him with petitions, signed by thousands of Americans, urging USDOT to make safe streets for bikers and pedestrians a priority. A T4America spokesman called LaHood's announcement recognition of the group's actions and a "major policy change ... expressing support for complete streets policies that integrate safe walking and biking into transportation networks."

LaHood announced the new policy on March 15 on Fast Lane, the official blog of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, saying:

"Today, I want to announce a sea change. People across America who value

bicycling should have a voice when it comes to transportation planning. This is the end of favoring motorized transportation at the expense of non-motorized.

"We are integrating the needs of bicyclists in federally funded road projects. We are discouraging transportation investments that negatively affect cyclists and pedestrians. And we are encouraging investments that go beyond the minimum requirements and provide facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities."

LaHood pointed out that the inter-agency DOT-EPA-HUD partnership on sustainable communities actively encourages planning for walkability and bikeability. He added that "bike projects are relatively fast and inexpensive to build and are environmentally sustainable; they reduce travel costs, dramatically improve safety and public health, and reconnect citizens with their communities."

According to the USDOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation, "the DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems".

To set this approach in motion, the policy statement includes the following key recommendations for state DOTs and communities.

Treat walking and bicycling as equal to other transportation modes: The primary goal of a transportation system is to safely and efficiently move people and goods. Walking and bicycling are efficient transportation modes for most short trips and, where convenient intermodal systems exist, these non-motorized trips can easily be linked with transit to significantly increase trip distance.

Ensure that there are transportation

choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks. For example, children should have safe and convenient options for walking or bicycling to school and parks.

Go beyond minimum design standards: Transportation agencies are encouraged, when possible, to avoid designing walking and bicycling facilities to the minimum standards. For example, shared-use paths that have been designed to minimum width requirements will need retrofits as more people use them. It is more effective to plan for increased usage than to retrofit an older facility.

Integrate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges: DOT encourages bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on bridge projects including facilities on limited-access bridges with connections to streets or paths.

Collect data on walking and biking trips: The best way to improve transportation networks for any mode is to collect and analyze trip data to optimize investments. Data is also valuable in linking walking and bicycling with transit.

Set mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time: The byproduct of improved data collection is that communities can establish targets for increasing the percentage of trips made by walking and bicycling.

Remove snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths.

Improve non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects.

For more information, visit [www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/bicycle-ped.html](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/bicycle-ped.html) or contact USDOT spokesman Gabe Rousseau at 202-366-8044 or [gabe.rousseau@dot.gov](mailto:gabe.rousseau@dot.gov).