

**Item #5**

District of Columbia
Bowie
College Park
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

MEMORANDUM**June 6, 2005**

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the May 18th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the May 18th TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the June 15th TPB agenda.

Attachments



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
Region III
1760 Market Street, Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-656-7100
215-656-7260 (fax)

Federal Highway Administration
DC Division
1990 K Street, N.W., Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006
202-219-3536
202-219-3545 (fax)

JUN 6 2005

Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
c/o Mr. Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4201

Re: Transportation Planning Process Certification Review

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for your metropolitan area on September 15, 19-21, 2005. These dates were selected in consultation with Ron Kirby, of your staff. The review will look at the cooperative planning process as conducted by the District, States, transit operators, and local governments in the area. You and all participants in the planning process are welcome to attend the review.


The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century continues the requirement for certification of the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 in population once every three years. Certification reviews are conducted with the objective of evaluating the transportation planning process. Consequently, we will not be conducting a pass/fail review, but rather we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. The Certification Process will rely extensively on knowledge gained throughout the year from routine contact with the planning process in the area, as well as the scheduled Certification Review meeting.


Enclosed is a draft agenda, which outlines the specific focal points we are proposing for the Certification Review. On September 15, 2005, the federal team will join the scheduled Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for an open dialogue concerning public involvement in the transportation planning process. On September 19-20, 2005, the federal team will meet with TPB members and staff to discuss organizational, policy, and technical issues. TPB staff will provide a brief overview and update on each topic, followed by a discussion involving all participating agencies. Finally, on September 21, 2005, the federal team will present their preliminary observations from the Certification Review to the TPB.

Mr. Phil Mendelson
Re: Transportation Planning Process Certification Review
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Should you have any questions regarding the Certification Review, please contact Deborah Burns of the FTA Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Office, at 202-219-3056, Tony Tarone, of the FTA Region III Office, at (215) 656-7061, or Sandra Jackson, of the FHWA District of Columbia Division, at (202) 219-3521.

Sincerely,


Susan Borinsky
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration


Gary L. Henderson
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Enclosure

cc: Dan Tangerlini, District of Columbia Division of Transportation
Richard White, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
JoAnne Sorenson, Northern Virginia District Office, VDOT
Kellie Gaver, Maryland Department of Transportation
Sherry Ways, FHWA Maryland Division
Ivan Rucker, FHWA Virginia Division
Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA Region III
Pat Kampf, FTA Region III
Brian Glenn, FTA Washington DC Metropolitan Office
Martin Kotsch, EPA Region III
Charlie Goodman, FTA Office of Planning

Federal Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process

September 15, 19-21, 2005

Washington Council of Governments, Washington, D.C

DRAFT AGENDA – 5/25/2005

Thursday, September 15th

6:00 p.m. The federal team will join the scheduled TPB Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for an open dialogue concerning public involvement in the transportation planning process.

Monday, September 19th

8:30 a.m. Federal Review Team Meeting

10:00 a.m. Introductions
Discussion of the FHWA/FTA Certification Process
Discussion of Major Regional Issues
Discussion of Findings and Recommendations from the 2002 Certification Review Final Report

11:45 a.m. Lunch

12:45 p.m. Overview of the Transportation Planning Process
Agreements: Cooperation and Coordination
Long Range Transportation Plan
Unified Planning Work Program
Transportation Improvement Program
Planning Factors

2:15 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. Air Quality Planning, SIP Planning and Conformity Issues

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

Tuesday, September 20th

8:30 a.m. Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint

10:00 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. Public Transit and Intermodal Planning

11:15 a.m. Goods Movement/Freight Planning

Noon Lunch

1:00 p.m. Safety and Security in the Transportation Planning Process

1:30 p.m. Congestion Management System and Travel Demand Forecasting

Draft Agenda

Re: Federal Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process

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2:15 p.m. Land Use and Transportation Planning

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Public Involvement Process, Title VI, and Environmental Justice.

4:00 p.m. Concluding Remarks/Adjourn

Wednesday, September 21st

8:30 a.m. Federal review team meets to develop draft findings

Noon Discussion by Federal Team of Certification Review Preliminary Observations



June 3, 2005

District of Columbia
Bowie
College Park
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

The Honorable Don Young
Chair, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
2111 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chair, Senate Environment and
Public Works Committee
453 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Oberstar
Ranking Member, House
Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Jeffords
Ranking Member, Senate Environment
and Public Works Committee
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Tolling Provisions in the Federal Transportation Bill

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, I am writing to urge your support for incorporating tolling provisions in the final transportation reauthorization bill that allow maximum flexibility for states and local jurisdictions to decide how to best implement tolling projects and use surplus revenue.

In response to severe congestion levels and transportation funding shortages, the Washington region is moving forward on implementing variable pricing both as a means of managing congestion and as an alternative source of funding. A new high-occupancy/toll (HOT lanes) facility on the Capital Beltway in Northern Virginia has been submitted for inclusion in the region's 2005 long-range transportation plan. The Washington region is seriously considering the implementation of additional variably priced lanes on several existing and new facilities, and is studying the potential for a region-wide system of such lanes.

The TPB recently adopted the attached goals for a regional system of variably priced lanes *"that work together as a multi-modal system, while addressing the special policy and operational issues raised by the multi-jurisdictional nature of this area."* In order to pursue these goals, the TPB is seeking tolling provisions in the final transportation reauthorization bill that allow states and local jurisdictions maximum flexibility in several key areas:

- The final bill should impose as few restrictions as possible on the types of facilities to which tolling may be applied. By allowing electronic tolling of existing tolled facilities, HOV facilities, newly constructed facilities, and new

lanes added to existing non-tolled facilities, the Senate version of H.R. 3 appears to provide more flexibility than the House version in this regard.

- The final bill should allow state and local jurisdictions maximum flexibility to decide how excess toll revenue is used to reduce congestion and improve air quality. In this regard as well, the Senate version of H.R. 3 appears to provide more flexibility than the House version.
- The final bill should provide responsible agencies with maximum flexibility in setting eligibility requirements for HOV/HOT lanes, so that reasonably free-flowing traffic can be maintained under the variety of operating conditions that will be experienced on different facilities. Both the Senate and the House version of H.R. 3 contain provisions in this regard that are too restrictive and difficult to administer.
- The final bill should continue to support pilot toll programs as a way to demonstrate the benefits of variable pricing and to test new techniques such as electronic tolling of existing general purpose lanes. To maximize the effectiveness of the program, the number and types of projects permitted should be comprehensive enough so that any jurisdiction interested in implementing a pilot toll program may do so. Neither the Senate or the House version of H.R. 3 is sufficiently comprehensive in this regard.

The TPB urges that as the conference committee develops the final bill, these key provisions allowing maximum flexibility in the design and implementation of toll facilities are incorporated. Thank you for your consideration of the TPB's views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Mendelson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Mendelson
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

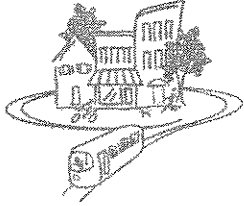
cc: Members of the Congressional Delegation
for the Washington Region

Goals for a Regional System of Variably-Priced Lanes
Approved by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
April 20, 2005

As the Washington region moves forward with plans to develop variably-priced lanes, it is anticipated that a system of variably-priced lanes will be implemented in phases, likely with one corridor or segment at a time. The following goals can help guide the regional development of variably-priced lanes that work together as a multi-modal system, while addressing the special policy and operational issues raised by the multi-jurisdictional nature of this area.

1. Operations, enforcement, reciprocity, technology, and toll-setting policies should be coordinated to ensure seamless connections between jurisdictional boundaries. The region should explore options for accommodating different eligibility requirements in different parts of the system of variably-priced lanes without inconvenience to the users.
2. The variably-priced lanes should be managed so that reasonably free-flowing conditions are maintained.
3. Electronic toll collection devices should be integrated and interoperable among the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, and should work with other multi-state electronic toll collection systems, such as E-Z PassSM.
4. To ensure safety and to maintain speeds of variably-priced lanes on high-speed facilities, one lane with a wide shoulder consistent with applicable FHWA guidelines should be provided at a minimum. Optimally, two lanes should be provided in each direction (or two lanes in the peak direction by means of reversible lanes) where possible.
5. Given the significant peak-hour congestion in the Washington area, transit bus service should be an integral part of a system of variably-priced lanes, beginning with project planning and design, in order to move the maximum number of people, not just the maximum number of vehicles.
6. Transit buses should have reasonably free-flowing and direct access to variably-priced lanes from major activity centers, key rail stations, and park-and-ride lots, so that transit buses do not have to cross several congested general purpose lanes.

7. Transit buses using the variably-priced lanes should have clearly designated and accessible stops at activity centers or park-and-ride lots, and signal priority or dedicated bus lanes to ensure efficient access to and from activity centers.
8. The region urges that the Congress and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recognize variably-priced lanes as fixed guideway miles so that federal transit funding does not decrease as a result of implementing variably-priced lanes.
9. The Washington region currently has approximately 200 miles of HOV lanes and a significant number of carpoolers, vanpoolers and other HOV-eligible vehicles. If the introduction of variably-priced lanes changes the eligibility policies for use of existing HOV facilities, transitional policies and sunset provisions should be set and clearly stated for all the users.
10. As individual phases of a system of variably-priced lanes are implemented, users of the lanes should be able to make connections throughout the region with minimal inconvenience or disruption.
11. Toll revenues from variably-priced lane projects may finance construction, service debt, and pay for operation and maintenance of the priced lanes. Should toll lanes operate at a revenue surplus, consideration should be given to enhancing transit services.



Coalition for Smarter Growth

Better Communities...Less Traffic

June 2, 2005

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Planning Board Members:


Congratulations on the successful kickoff to your Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign. We commend you on your inclusive approach that incorporates education, engineering, and enforcement in addressing pedestrian safety issues. Citizens benefit if they gain an increasing awareness that pedestrian injuries and fatalities result not only from dangerous driver or pedestrian behavior but from inadequate and unsafe infrastructure as well.

The media coverage of your Street Smart initiatives has been a positive influence in shaping the public's awareness. As you continue to work with the many stakeholders in your campaign, particularly the police chiefs, we request that you encourage them to discuss the influence design has on pedestrian safety any time they have an opportunity to speak to the media. We specifically recommend that police and media report the following for all pedestrian and bicycle accidents: the width and speed of the street, crossing time, the distance between crosswalks, and if one even existed at that location. Too often the media only report that the pedestrian was not in a crosswalk. The more we address these issues, the more support we can gain for safer street design.

As the campaign moves forward, it is imperative that the TPB and its member governments commit to increased funding for improvements to the infrastructure that will create safer street designs for pedestrians and cyclists. Improved sidewalks, countdown timers, bulb-outs, improved striping and lighting, street "diets," median safety islands, and bike lanes all contribute to a safer pedestrian environment and require adequate funding.

Again, congratulations on a successful kickoff to your campaign. We look forward to continuing to work with you in creating a safer environment for pedestrians throughout our region.

Best regards,


Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director

4000 Albemarle Street, NW • Suite 310 • Washington, DC 20016
(202) 244-4408 fax: (202) 244-4438
www.smartergrowth.net



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Michael S. Steele
Lt. Governor

Robert L. Flanagan
Secretary

James F. Ports, Jr.
Deputy Secretary

June 1, 2005

Mr. Dennis Jaffe, Chair
Citizen Advisory Committee for the
Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

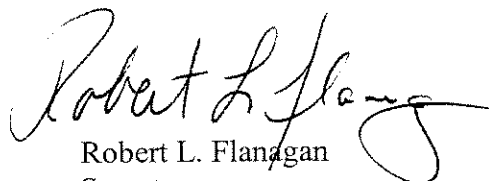
Dear Mr. Jaffe:

Thank you for your letter of in which you expressed your support for the region's transportation coordination program known as CAPCOM. Mr. John Contestabile, Director of the Office of Engineering, Procurement, and Emergency Services here at the Maryland Department of Transportation, has been working for several months with an ad hoc group of transportation leaders to develop this concept.

Please understand that we fully realize the importance of transportation coordination during incidents; both everyday occurrences as well as those related to homeland security. The ad hoc group has been exploring and implementing a number of improvements in our respective agency's practices, procedures and communication methods toward the goal of improved coordination. We are pleased that the Senior Policy Group members also view this activity as important and awarded \$1 M for this effort. Notwithstanding, you correctly point out that there is an ongoing cost to continue to support this initiative that would fall to the region's transportation agencies.

I will be meeting with my staff to discuss this issue in some detail prior to the planned Transportation Planning Board work session slated for July 20, 2005. We would expect to have a Department position we can share at that meeting. Thank you for your interest in and support of this initiative.

Sincerely,


Robert L. Flanagan
Secretary

My telephone number is 410-865-1000
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY User Call Via MD Relay
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

Mr. Dennis Jaffe, Chair

Page Two

cc: Mr. John M. Contestabile, Director, Office of Engineering, Procurement &
Emergency Services, MDOT
Mr. Pierce Homer, Secretary, National Capital Region Transportation Board
Ms. Marsha Kaiser, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
Mr. R. Earl Lewis, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Administration, MDOT
Mr. Phil Mandelsen, Chairman, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Mr. James F. Ports, Jr., Deputy Secretary, MDOT
Mr. Dan Tangerlini, Director, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Mr. Richard White, General Manager, National Capital Region Transportation Planning
Board



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

(804) 786-8032
Fax: (804) 786-6683
TTY: (800) 828-1120

Pierce R. Homer
Secretary of Transportation

May 31, 2005

Mr. Dennis Jaffe, Chairman
Citizen Advisory Committee for the National
Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Mr. Jaffe:

Thank you for my copy of your letter regarding CapCOM. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is strongly behind the concept of a regional operation coordination process, protocol, and structure and shares your concern on the commitment and financial support from all regional stakeholders. VDOT has been working cooperatively with its counterparts in Maryland, the District of Columbia, WMATA, and the University of Maryland in an Ad Hoc Steering Committee format in planning such a structure and securing start-up funding support. Virginia will do what it can to contribute the success of CapCOM.

I am happy to inform you that the region was awarded \$1 million from the FY05 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program as the start-up fund. The initial work on developing a work plan can readily leverage this fund. Once a detailed work plan is developed, VDOT will carefully review and program financial support appropriately into our budget process. VDOT is hopeful that the \$2 million Congressional earmark that still remains in the House Transportation Bill will be approved. VDOT will contribute to the required matching funds as it has been contributing to regional projects ever since the region started receiving earmark funding. It is, however, too premature to provide a tangible financial commitment on the annual operating fund without a detailed plan available for consideration as VDOT views CapCOM as a long-term operating entity instead of a one-time project.

You indicated in your letter that a tentative institutional structure for CapCOM was proposed and then approved by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). VDOT supported, and funded, the work in developing such an institutional structure for CapCOM. This financial support indicated VDOT's commitment, support, and leadership from the beginning on the establishment of CapCOM.

Mr. Dennis Jaffe
May 23, 2005
Page Two

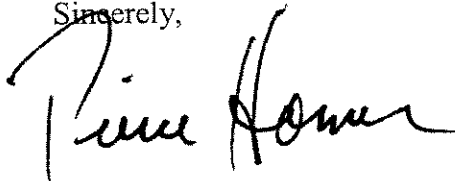
You suggested a regional high-level discussion and I am happy to inform you that a TPB Work Session is planned for July 20, 2005 on this topic. VDOT will participate in this important regional dialogue.

If you have more questions in the future regarding CapCOM, please contact Dick Steeg at (703) 383-2459. Mr. Steeg is VDOT's representative to the ad hoc steering committee developing CapCOM and other regional operational issues.

Let me assure you that it is in VDOT's best interest to establish a regional transportation coordination entity, like CapCOM, to oversee the planning, communications, and dissemination of status information associated with the region's transportation system during major incidents.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pierce R. Homer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "H".

Pierce R. Homer

PRH:es

Copy: Mr. Philip A. Shucet, VDOT Commissioner
Ms. Dennis Morrison