

## REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

December 15, 2011

Rob Mandle, CAC Chair

The CAC meeting on December 15 meeting included a discussion of a planned web clearinghouse on transportation planning activities throughout the region, a briefing on the TPB's triennial aerial congestion survey and an update on the development of the TPB priorities plan. This was the first meeting officially chaired by Rob Mandle who was appointed at the November TPB meeting to serve as CAC chair until the 2012 committee convenes in February.

### **Briefing on 2011 Peak Period Freeway Congestion in the Washington Region, and Changes Since 2008 and 2005**

Daivamani Sivasailam of TPB staff briefed the committee on the findings of the 2011 Freeway Congestion Monitoring Program. He explained that the program is designed to identify the severity and extent of congestion on major highways in the region by using aerial survey photography provided by SKYCOMP, a private firm. The photographs are taken over four consecutive days during three hours of the morning and evening peak periods, and the density of cars (passenger cars per lane per mile) is used to estimate level of service (LOS) and average speed. The "top ten" congested locations (based on density) and congested corridors (based on travel time) were also identified. The aerial survey has been conducted every three years since 1993, providing an opportunity to monitor changes in congestion over time.

Mr. Sivasailam explained that the main findings of the 2011 survey are that lane-miles of congestion have increased significantly since 2008 (after decreasing between 2005 and 2008). He said that more "peak spreading" is occurring—that is, that congestion is getting worse during the earlier and later parts of each of the three-hour "peak periods" being surveyed. And he explained that construction activity does influence levels of congestion by causing higher densities and lower speeds.

The CAC was very interested to learn about this program and the results of the most recent survey. The committee asked a few questions and expressed a few concerns.

- ***The committee asked whether the survey data are or could be used to project future increases or decreases in congestion, especially in corridors where transit improvements are planned.*** Mr. Sivasailam explained that this program only monitors congestion and that it does not project future changes—it is intended to provide a snapshot of conditions and to identify "hot spots." He also explained that it's hard to isolate which factors (like transit improvements) affect congestion in a given corridor.
- ***The committee asked why total lane-miles of LOS F increased so dramatically between 2008 and 2011, and why congestion during the PM peak period is worse.*** Mr. Kirby explained that the economic recession probably caused total lane-miles of LOS F to

decrease significantly between 2005 and 2008, and that the increase between 2008 and 2011 is a sign of economic recovery. Mr. Sivasailam explained that increased congestion during the PM peak period is probably caused by extra trips (e.g., shopping, errands, etc.) that people tend to make after work as opposed to before work.

- *The committee expressed concern that the findings of such a survey make it easy to identify roadway improvements that would further encourage auto use rather than helping to identify more sustainable transportation solutions.*

### **Discussion of a Planned TPB Clearinghouse on Local, State and Regional Transportation Planning Activities**

Ben Hampton of the TPB staff led the CAC in a discussion about a planned web-based clearinghouse that will help citizens understand the region's transportation planning processes. This clearinghouse will provide key information on local, state and regional planning activities, and web links to those activities. Mr. Hampton asked the CAC to provide input on the clearinghouse's overarching goals, core functions and key components.

CAC members were especially supportive of the concept of a public involvement dashboard and/or a weekly notification of public involvement opportunities throughout the region. Some members noted, however, that staff should be cautious about developing a website that will be too difficult or time-intensive to maintain. They further warned that the website must not "over-promise" what it is able to provide.

Other CAC member comments included the following:

- Staff should limit the amount of original work that needs to go into developing content for the website. The clearinghouse should glean information from the websites of the TPB members.
- Staff should consider implementing a system that allows member jurisdictions to update materials themselves on a regular basis.
- The CLRP/TIP information that is already presented on the TPB website should be integrated into or linked to from the new clearinghouse.
- The clearinghouse should provide readily accessible contact information for member jurisdictions and/or agencies.
- Staff should research other websites that might provide examples of potential components or features of the clearinghouse.
- Video recordings of TPB meetings should be available on local access television and/or the web.
- The clearinghouse should seek to provide information for people with limited English proficiency.
- An iTunes channel with video and audio recordings of meetings should be established and integrated into the clearinghouse.
- The clearinghouse should make use of social media to disseminate information.

## **Update on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan**

Ron Kirby of TPB staff briefed the committee on the status of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. In particular, he presented to the CAC a copy of “Draft Interim Report 1: Initial Goals, Performance Measures, Challenges, and Strategies, and Proposed Public Outreach Activities through June 30, 2012” to be presented to the TPB at its December 21 meeting.

He explained that the report provides some background on the Priorities Plan, the federal government’s focus on performance measurement, and the results of an “international scan” of best practices in performance measurement related to transportation planning. He also said that the report addresses Task 1 and Task 2 of the RTPP Scope and Process: reaffirming goals and identifying performance measures; and, identifying regional challenges and strategies to address them.

Mr. Kirby’s briefing focused on the final section of the report: the proposed public outreach activities and scheduled through June 2012. He explained that staff would be conducting a listening session with the CAC in January, at which time the committee would have an opportunity to discuss at length and provide comment on the initial list of performance measures, challenges, and strategies identified in the draft interim report. Mr. Kirby explained that the feedback from the CAC and other listening groups—to include the Access for All Committee (AFA), COG’s Air and Climate Policy Advisory Committee (ACPAC), and other stakeholder groups—would be used to finalize the draft interim report and to prepare for a series of focus groups planned for April.

Mr. Kirby asked the committee to read through the draft interim report carefully and to come to the listening session in January (scheduled to occur during the CAC’s regularly-scheduled January meeting) ready to discuss and provide feedback on the performance measures, challenges, and strategies identified in the report.

## **CAC Election**

Based upon the process laid out in the TPB Participation Plan, the CAC elected the following individuals to be members of the 2012 CAC:

- DC: Harold Foster & Larry Martin
- Maryland: Tina Slater & Emmet Tydings
- Virginia: Maureen Budetti & Allen Muchnick

At the TPB’s January 18 meeting, the TPB officers will nominate an additional nine individuals to the CAC, making a full complement of 15 members. Also at that meeting, the new TPB chair will name a CAC chair for 2012.

## **Other Business**

- The final meeting of the 2011 CAC will be conducted on January 12. The full slate of 15 CAC members, plus any alternates, will be approved by the TPB on January 18. The first meeting of the 2012 CAC will occur on February 9.
- Ron Kirby briefed the committee on the upcoming TPB agenda.

## **ATTENDANCE** **CAC Meeting, December 15, 2011**

### Members Present

1. Rob Mandle, Chair (DC)
2. Maureen Budetti (VA)
3. Bill Easter (MD)
4. Harold Foster (DC)
5. Kelby Funn (MD)
6. Larry Martin (DC)
7. Allen Muchnick (VA)
8. Tina Slater (MD)
9. Emmet Tydings (MD)
10. Fred Walker (VA)
11. Faith Wheeler (DC)

### Members Not Present

1. Howard Levine (MD)
2. Stephen McCoy (DC)
3. Madeline McDuffy (VA)
4. Brian Winterhalter (VA)

### Alternates Present

- Mauricio Hernandez (DC)
- Kimberley Kaplan (VA)
- Stephen Still (VA)

### Staff and Guests

- Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
- Daivamani Sivasailam, COG/TB staff
- John Swanson, COG/TPB staff
- Ben Hampton, COG/TPB staff
- Gareth James, COG/TPB staff
- Chris Der, citizen
- Bill Orleans, citizen