

ITEM 10 - Action

March 21, 2007

Response to Comments on the Approval of Amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are Exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Realign Project Funding, as Requested by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)

Attached are the comments of the Demarche Alliance Inc. on the proposed amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP, followed by the response from DDOT.

Before The
District of Columbia Department of Transportation

Item 14

Proposed Amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are Exempt from the
Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Realign Project Funding

Comments of the Demarche Alliance Inc.

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Dated: March 15, 2007

ITEM 14 - Notice Item

February 21, 2007

Notice of Proposed Amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are Exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Realign Project Funding, as Requested by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)

Staff

Recommendation: Review proposed amendments

Issues: None

Background: Notice is provided that DDOT has requested amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are exempt from the air quality conformity requirement to realign project funding, as described in the enclosed materials.

These amendments would not require any changes to the air quality conformity analysis conducted for the FY 2007-2012 TIP.

This request is being considered for a 30-day public comment period beginning with the posting of the request on the TPB web site (mwcog.org/transportation) on February 15, 2007 and ending at 5 pm on March 17, 2007. The Board will be asked to act on this request at the March 21, 2007 meeting. Comments may be provided to the TPB in writing, at the TPB web site, or during the public comment period provided prior to each TPB meeting.

Introduction

The comments are being filed by The Demarche Alliance Inc in response to Proposed Amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are exempt from the Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Realign Project Funding, as Requested by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation.

Interest of Demarche Alliance Inc.

The Demarche Alliance (DMA) is a non-profit organization that focuses on educating traditionally disadvantaged (low income/minority) communities on transportation issues. The mission of the organization is to improve the level of involvement in the transportation planning process of these communities. DMA serves these communities by increasing the awareness of transportation projects in their community, and assists in ensuring that needs and requirements of the public involvement process for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are met. Essentially, The Demarche Alliance is one of many organizations that are at the disposal of MPOs that ensure that full participation in the public involvement process from all communities is achieved.

Background

Highly Populated Minority Areas

Since the focus of the Demarche Alliance is on disadvantaged communities, the comments provided will focus on projects located in communities with the highest concentration of minorities and low income individuals. From a cursory view, it is difficult to discern between a single race and Hispanic origin as prescribed by the most recent census data compiled for the city by the DC Office of Planning. Hispanic origin can be of any race as reflected in the data, and therefore, the true percentages by race are skewed. So for the purposes of identifying areas that pertain to the Demarche mission, African –Americans were selected as an indicator of a “disadvantaged person”. Thus, projects in the following wards with the highest African-American population were considered which will be defined as Highly Populated Minority Areas or HPMA. Consequently, these areas also consist of the households that are among the lowest in income levels.

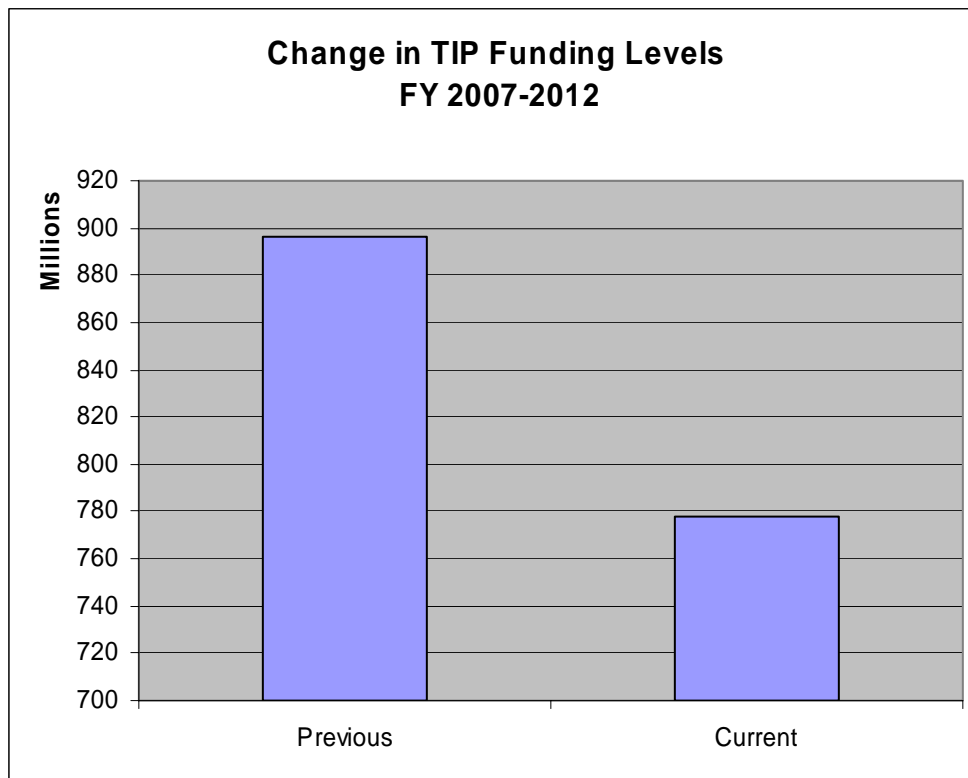
Ward (HPMA)	Percentage African American	Income Per Capita	Income Ratio to Non-HPMA*
Ward 1	44.9	23,760	2.1
Ward 4	72.1	27,057	1.8
Ward 5	84.7	19,173	2.6
Ward 6	58.6	28,636	1.7
Ward 7	96.8	16,959	2.9
Ward 8	92.1	12,630	4.0

*This indicates a ratio of HPMA income to Non-HPMA. Non-HPMA areas consist of Ward 2 and 3. For example, residents on average in Ward 2 and 3 make 2 times more than residents in Ward 1.

District Transportation Funding

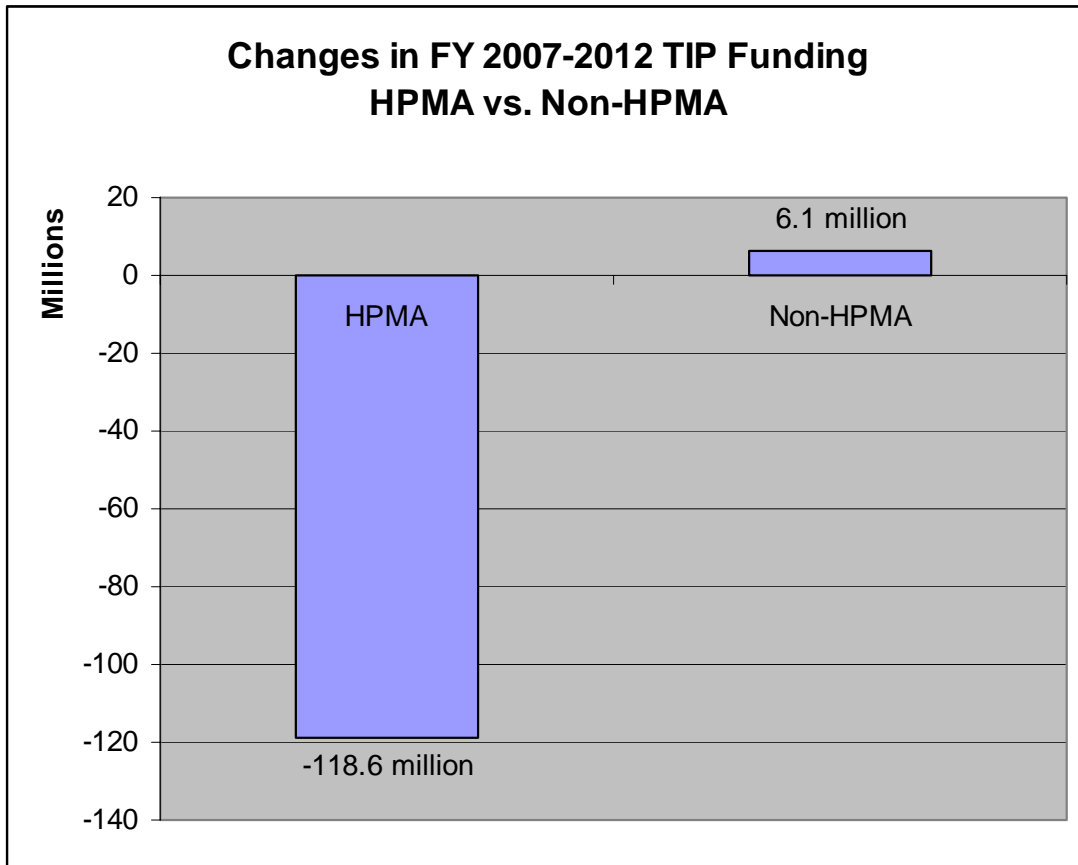
Overall there are approximately 41 projects across all programs that are listed on the work plan totaling 896,172,000 for locations labeled as HPMAs. This amount is a 14.2% decrease from the previously established amount of 777,567,000. This is a moderate reduction considering the overall amount of funding for the region. Although the amount of transportation funding is dedicated toward gentrification projects such as the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and the Southwest Waterfront Initiative, the change in the total funding amount for Highly Populated Minority Areas have been impacted as compared to the remaining wards in the region. **Figure 1** depicts the level of funding specifically for HMPA areas.

Figure 1: Change in HMPA Funding Level



HPMA locations experience a disproportionate reduction in funding as compared to the other Wards in the region. There is a decrease of approximately 118 million as compared to an increase of 6.1 million in projects that are specific to Wards 2 and Wards 3. **Figure 2** displays the changes in TIP funding for HMPA and Non-HPMA locations in the District.

Figure 2: HMPA vs. Non- HMPA Funding Changes



Specific Comments

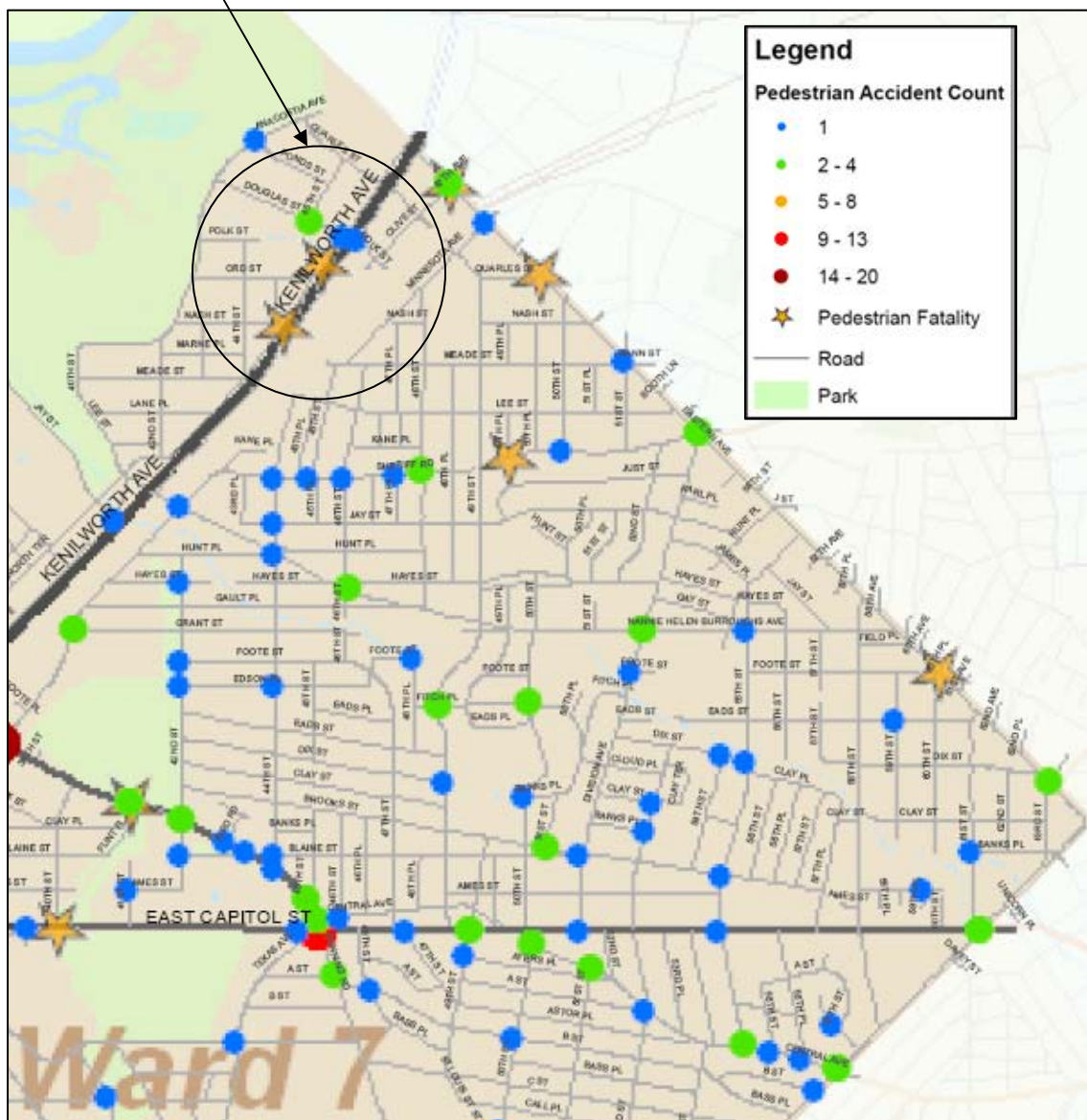
Funding Amounts are Substantial

Overall, the amount of funding for HPMA locations across the city is substantial. This can be attributed to several redevelopment projects currently underway as well as planned future development. In addition, the Great Street Initiative dedicates 89 million to these areas, and the program only incurred a decrease of less than 1 million in funding. This is a positive move for the city to continue to invest in these areas by reconstructing sidewalks, intersections and store fronts. However, it is imperative the communities stay involved and in methods in which this money is spent. Since the majority of this funding is tied to development, many residents feel that their ideas will not be included as apart of the development plans for revamping the atmosphere of their community. Traditionally, many residents feel that planning for large scale projects have been predetermined, and the public involvement process is viewed as a requirement rather than a necessity. Thus, as the Great Streets program continues to fund these areas that are experiencing new development, the managers of this program should consider the community needs.

Safety Concerns

Out of the 41 projects that have been identified in the Highly Populated Minority Areas, only one project was de-funded completely. The pedestrian bridge from Douglas Street to Meade Street was to receive 5.5 million for a newly constructed structure. The main issue with this extraction is that potential impact on pedestrian safety in Kenilworth neighborhood. From 2000 to 2005, there were 6 pedestrian accidents and 2 fatalities between Douglas and Meade streets. This indicates the need to perhaps reconfigure pedestrian access at these locations. The figure below displays the amount of fatalities and incidents surrounding Kenilworth Avenue.

Kenilworth Avenue,
Douglas and Meade Street
Intersections

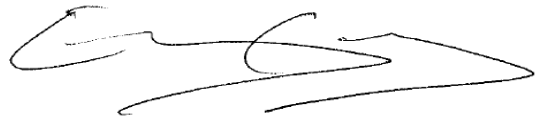


This project should be reconsidered to receive funding in the next Transportation Improvement Program cycle. It is important the projects that protect the citizens of these areas and safely provides access to goods services and entertainment.

Conclusion

The Demarche Alliance realized the unique opportunity that the District has to effectively fund and build transportation projects that impact communities city-wide. The overall funding for projects that directly impact highly populated minority areas is substantial, however, the funding level decreased from the previously submitted draft of Transportation Improvement Program. While budget shifts are necessary, any reallocation of funding should not occur at the behest of traditionally disadvantage populations. The District Department of Transportation should continue to acknowledge this fact and ensure the capitol cost reflects the accessibility and safety needs of all communities.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eulois Cleckley', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Eulois Cleckley
Executive Director
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Dated: March 15, 2007



District Department of Transportation

Proposed Amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are Exempt from the
Air Quality Conformity Requirement to Realign Project Funding

DDOT Response to Comments of the Demarche Alliance Inc.

Prepared by:

Rick Rybeck
Deputy Associate Director
Transportation Policy & Planning Administration

March 21, 2007

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) welcomes the comments from the Demarche Alliance (DMA) regarding proposed amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP that are exempt from the air quality conformity requirement to realign project funding. DDOT shares DMA's concerns about the impacts of transportation infrastructure investments on neighborhoods, particularly those populated by persons or households who are disadvantaged as a result of discrimination or lack of income.

DMA analyzes the changes in the District's proposed portion of the Region's Fiscal Year 2007 through Fiscal Year 2012 Transportation Improvement Plan (FY07-FY12 TIP). The analysis looks at the revised TIP (which shows a 14% reduction in funding) and examines how these reductions were distributed among 6 of the District's 8 wards and compares this with reductions or increases in the two wards that have the highest incomes (Wards 2 & 3).

DDOT did not undertake this analysis and will examine its utility in terms of evaluating future programs. In the present instance, it must be stated that the District's TIP revisions were not the result of any decision to alter DDOT's citywide program. Rather, as a result of sudden staffing changes that occurred across administrations, the process of assembling the FY07-FY12 TIP was subject to errors that included, but were not limited to the following:

- Some projects were entered two or three times in the document;
- Project schedules were not updated to show current planning estimates; and
- Project funding was not updated to show changes in costs or revenues.

These and other errors caused the initial TIP submission to be substantially over-programmed in relation to the available funding. In order to comply with the requirement for a fiscally constrained TIP, these errors required correction. If only a few small errors had been made, this would have constituted a "technical correction" to our program. However, in light of the substantial changes that resulted from correcting errors (a 14% change in funding), DDOT believed that it was important to make the public aware of these changes.

Project selection and scheduling are based on the conditions of roadways, bridges and other transportation and transit infrastructure. They are also based upon economic development priorities that are predominantly located in disadvantaged communities. These initiatives include the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and the Great Streets program.

Additionally, DDOT's Streetcar program has run into real world obstacles related to procurement, real estate acquisition, community alignment preferences, etc. Therefore, the timing and funding for aspects of this project have been adjusted. Because the initial phases of the DC Streetcar program are located in disadvantaged communities, these TIP revisions may create the appearance that DDOT is negatively affecting these neighborhoods. In fact, it is these neighborhoods that have been (and continue to be) the focus of DDOT's programs and investments.