

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

SUBJECT: Proposal for Formation of a TPB Task Force on Future Activities of the Regional
Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (Scenario Study Task Force)

DATE: September 19, 2007

At its July 18, 2007 meeting, the TPB was briefed on a report summarizing feedback from staff outreach activities related to the Scenario Study over the past several months. Attached to this memo is the handout from that meeting, including the feedback report and accompanying PowerPoint, as well as recommendations issued earlier this year by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) calling for more active stewardship of the Scenario Study and for specific study activities.

The feedback report raises several questions regarding the future direction of the Scenario Study and related TPB activities. Following the briefing by staff at the July TPB meeting, the Board determined that now would be an appropriate time to address these questions along with the related CAC recommendations through creation of a TPB Task Force on the Scenario Study. TPB Chair Cathy Hudgins indicated that TPB member Michael Knapp had agreed to lead a TPB task force on this issue, and directed staff to present the Board with a proposal for creation of the task force at the September 19 TPB meeting.

This memorandum outlines a proposed mission, structure, and set of activities for a Scenario Study Task Force, to be put into effect after consideration and approval by the TPB at its September 19, 2007 meeting.

Background

Scenario Study Phase I

The TPB launched the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS) in 2001. A joint technical working group (JTWG) comprised of transportation and land use planning staff from the region's jurisdictions and interested citizens has overseen study activities to this point. This working group developed different land use and transportation scenarios based on key challenges

related to the region's future growth and guided analysis of these alternatives, including effects on congestion, transit use, and vehicle miles of travel. TPB staff produced a technical report and summary brochure entitled "What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?" in fall 2006, completing Phase I of the Study.

Scenario Study Phase II

With assistance from the CAC and alumni of the TPB Community Leadership Institute, TPB staff has conducted a series of public forums and presentations to planning professionals and elected officials on the results of Phase I of the Scenario Study. A report summarizing feedback from these events was presented to the TPB in July 2007. Meanwhile, additional Scenario Study activities are underway. These include development and analysis of scenarios that analyze alternatives with a regional network of variably-priced lanes, analysis of scenario costs and localized impacts, and development of techniques for communicating scenario results through visualization. These activities are anticipated to conclude in December 2007.

Proposed TPB Scenario Study Task Force

Mission

- The TPB Scenario Study Task Force will provide policy-level stewardship for the Scenario Study and related TPB activities, including consideration of opportunities for integration of study findings into TPB planning processes and initiatives.

Membership

The Scenario Study Task Force will be similar in structure to the existing TPB Value Pricing Task Force. The Task Force will be chaired through December 2008 by TPB member Michael Knapp of the Montgomery County Council. Other interested TPB members (voting or non-voting) will be invited to serve on the task force, with a goal of achieving good representation from implementing agencies and local jurisdiction members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Other interested persons, including representatives of other TPB Committees such as the Technical Committee and the CAC, will be welcome to attend Task Force meetings and participate as appropriate.

Activities

Activities of the Scenario Study Task Force in Fall 2007 will focus on the completion of Phase II of the Study as described above, and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Review findings and products from Phase I of the Scenario Study, including the technical report and "What If the Washington Region Grew Differently?" brochure
2. Review in greater detail the report on feedback from staff outreach presentations.

3. Receive briefings on Phase II study activities currently in progress, including information on variably-priced lane scenarios, analysis of scenario costs and localized impacts, techniques for communicating scenario results through visualization, and feedback from any additional staff presentations.
4. Receive updates on the status of related COG/TPB activities, including the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program and the Greater Washington 2050 Working Group, and any other regional initiatives involving study and/or advocacy of alternative transportation and land use scenarios.

Activities of the Task Force from January 2008 onward will entail stewardship of a Phase III of the Study which will focus increasingly on implementation or “how to” steps, building on the “what if” and public outreach activities of Phases I and II. These Phase III activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Determine appropriate Phase III research activities in support of implementation steps, which could include:
 - More detailed “drilling down” to the community and project level using existing scenario results, such as conducting sensitivity analyses for specific project combinations or land use shifts;
 - Evaluation of scenario results based on additional measures of effectiveness, such as environmental factors and other quality of life indicators; and
 - Development of one or more composite scenarios that combine elements of existing or new scenarios.
2. Consider scenario planning activities and related initiatives taking place in other regions, especially those conducted by other MPOs, and determine applicability and adaptability of options for this region.
3. Consider opportunities for incorporation of lessons from the Scenario Study and consensus strategies into the regional planning process, including transportation project prioritization.
4. Determine the need for and oversee implementation of any additional public outreach activities related to the Scenario Study.

The RMAS joint technical working group (JTWG) will continue to provide technical guidance for Scenario Study research activities, while this TPB Task Force will provide policy stewardship for the Study and related activities.

Timeframe

The Scenario Study Task Force will be authorized for the period between October 2007 and December 2008, with the possibility of continuation if warranted.

Proposed Meeting Schedule

- The task force will meet every other month after an initial October meeting. Meetings will be held during the morning on the day of the TPB meeting, similar to the Value Pricing Task Force but in opposite months.

Reporting

- An interim report on the status of the task force's work will be made to the TPB in Spring 2008, with an additional report at the conclusion of the initial task force period in December 2008.