

REPORT

**TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
May 21, 2003
Karren Pope-Onwukwe, Chair**

The Citizens Advisory Committee met on May 15. The meeting was chaired by CAC Vice Chair Allen Muchnick. Agenda items included a discussion of the submissions for the 2003 Update to the Constrained Long-Range Plan and the recent report of the Access for All Advisory Committee.

Briefing and Discussion Regarding the 2003 Update to the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP)

Ron Kirby, Director of COG's Department of Transportation Planning, briefed the CAC on the 2003 Update to the CLRP. He described the financial analysis for the plan update and major new projects submitted for the plan. He said that few new projects were included in the submissions. He also described the coordination with the air quality plan update.

CAC questions and concerns regarding the CLRP included:

- Why is there very little project implementation activity slated between 2020 and 2030? Mr. Kirby responded that essentially funding is being borrowed from the outyears to pay for projects before 2020.
- How will Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMs) or Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) be tied into the process? Mr. Kirby responded that some TCMs would be considered at the May TPB meeting. These would be modest capital improvements that would be relatively certain to be accomplished.

Is there anything the TPB can do to promote hybrid cars? Mr. Kirby said that local governments have recently focused on reducing high-polluting vehicles within their own fleets.

- A CAC member expressed interest in learning how the federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funding is used to mitigate potential emissions exceedances.

Briefing on the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee's Report "Improving Transit Information for Limited English Speakers"

Wendy Klancher of the COG/TPB staff reported on the AFA Committee's recent report.

CAC questions and comments included:

A member noted the need for information to be rendered in universal graphics. He also said that the first language that transportation information needs to be translated into is English, i.e., information needs to be clear and concise.

- A member suggested coordinating with the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

A member suggested providing information on transportation information for job training sites and day care facilities.

- A member said that videotapes explaining how to use the Metro system should be played on monitors at Metrorail stations.

Resolution in Support of Sierra Club Proposal "Get MetroBus on the Map"

CAC member Dennis Jaffe expressed the need for better bus information for everyone, not just for people with limited English proficiency. He said that currently bus maps cost \$1.50 and are only available at three sites in D.C. Bus maps with adequate information are not posted. He said that the Sierra Clubs in D.C., Maryland and Virginia had recently contacted WMATA to propose:

- 1) distribution of free, portable Metrobus system maps;
- 2) increasing the number of locations where the maps are available;
- 3) posting Metrobus systems maps at all Metrorail stations, and at Metrobus shelters; and
- 4) development of an action plan to upgrade information at all bus stops.

Mr. Jaffe said that he was seeking endorsements for this proposal. He noted that it seems that WMATA has resisted this proposal because of funding constraints, but he said that this excuse is not justified especially in light of WMATA's extensive marketing efforts.

A member said that distribution of the maps is essential to building goodwill. She said it is surprising that this conversation about providing improved bus information is even necessary at all.

Ms. Klancher noted that the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) had plans to install bus maps at shelters in downtown. Mr. Jaffe noted that the map would be installed only at shelters within the BID district.

A member said that the Metrobus map might not be appropriate for immigrants who have limited literacy and map-reading skills. Other members responded that the bus map is not perfect, but its wide-spread release would be an important step.

The CAC voted to unanimously endorse the Sierra Club proposal, which is attached to this report.

Value Pricing Conference

Ron Kirby briefed the CAC on the value pricing conference on June 4. He announced that the conference would be open at a reduced rate of \$20 to individuals who are not affiliated with organizations.

CAC Outreach Meetings

The CAC held two outreach meetings in May:

“Show Me the Money: Financing D.C.’s Transportation System,” May 7 at the Martin Luther King Library in Washington. The meeting featured D.C. Councilmembers Phil Mendelson and Jim Graham, and DDOT Director Dan Tangherlini. The meeting provided important information about funding issues that are reflected in this year’s update to the CLRP. The meeting was co-hosted by the Committee of 100 and the DC League of Women Voters. About 40 people participated in this lively discussion.

- **“The Purple Line: What Would It Mean to Prince George’s County and the Region?”** May 20 at the Treetops Atrium in Landover, Maryland. The meeting featured Prince George’s County Executive Jack Johnson, County Councilmembers Peter Shapiro and Tom Hendershot, and Henry Kay, MTA Director of Planning. This forum provided a very useful and timely update on the status of the Purple Line project, especially the eastern portion between Silver Spring and New Carrollton. Nearly 100 people attended, many of whom asked questions, offered comments and were able to network with their fellow citizens who are also interested in this project.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Meeting

May 15, 2003

Members

1. Allen Muchnick, VA, Vice Chair
2. Steve Caflisch, MD
3. Jim Clarke, MD
4. Federico Cura, VA
5. Glen Harvie, MD
6. Merle Van Home, DC
7. Dennis Jaffe, DC
8. Nancy Jakowitsch, DC
9. Lee Schoenecker, DC

Alternates

Harold Foster, DC
Harry Sanders, MD

Members Not Present

Nathaniel Bryant, MD
Bob Chase, VA
John Edwards, VA
Glen Harvie, MD
Jacque Patterson, DC
Karren Pope-Onwukwe, MD

Guests and COG/TPB Staff

Pete Garcia
Ron Kirby, COG/DTP
Wendy Klancher, COG/DTP
John Swanson, COG/DTP

RESOLUTION

Of the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

Approved May 15, 2003

The CAC hereby endorses and forwards to the TPB the attached proposal "Get MetroBus on the Map," which was developed by the Sierra Club and forwarded to Jim Graham, Chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on May 13, 2003.

Approved by unanimous vote, May 15, 2003



Mid-Atlantic Office

May 13, 2003

Chairman Jim Graham
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
By Fax: (202) 962-1133

Dear Chairman Graham and WMATA Board Members:

We are writing on behalf of our 17,000 members in the Washington region to ask you to take immediate steps to improve information about the MetroBus system, as explained in our proposal, "Get MetroBus on the Map" (see attached).

As you know, the Washington region is out of compliance with federal health standards for clean air, and cars and trucks are a major source of our pollution problems. Improving and promoting our MetroBus system to attract more riders can help improve air quality.

The MetroBus system is something of a mystery in the region to many residents and visitors. Many people do not ride MetroBus because they don't know where the bus goes or which route to take, and it's not very easy to find out. Bus system maps are not widely available, and have a charge of \$1.50 each. Many bus stops lack even the most basic information, such as route numbers or destinations, as well as maps and schedules. This provides a barrier to residents and visitors who are not familiar with the MetroBus system. In fact, in a survey of non-bus riders done as part of WMATA's Regional Bus Study, the top reason cited for not taking the bus was a lack of information.

We urge the WMATA Board to immediately take several steps to implement this proposal, including: distribution of free, portable MetroBus system maps; increasing the number of locations where they are available; posting MetroBus system maps at all MetroRail stations and MetroBus shelters; and developing an action plan to upgrade information at all bus stops. Our complete proposal is on the following page.

We believe that widely providing the public with MetroBus system maps would be more useful and cost-effective than the current radio campaign costing tens of thousands of dollars. Listeners cannot learn anything from the ads about where bus routes run unless they actually visit the agency's website or call the hotline.

We look forward to hearing your response. If you have any questions, please contact Dennis Jaffe at (202) 232-2525, DJWorkHome@aol.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Roger Diedrich, Chair
Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter

Jon Robinson, Chair
Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter

Mark Wenzler, Chair
Sierra Club, Washington D.C. Chapter



Mid-Atlantic Office

May 13, 2003

Get MetroBus on the Map

A Proposal to Increase MetroBus Ridership Through Better Bus Information

This proposal originated based on the following notions:

- a) MetroBus routes are a mystery for residents and visitors in the Washington, DC metropolitan region;
- b) The mystery of where buses run results in ridership levels being lower than they could be;
- c) Public information about MetroBus routes should be as useful and easy-to-obtain as about MetroRail;
- d) Taking the mystery out of MetroBus would result in higher ridership levels; and
- e) Higher MetroBus ridership levels would help improve air quality in our region.

The specific ideas described below were devised so that when a DC-area traveler is about to travel from point A to point B - especially a new route - that traveler will have convenient access to the information needed to consider MetroBus as a viable option. Certainly there are other effective ways to increase public awareness. These are intended as core components to take the mystery out and Get MetroBus on the Map.

Core components and their basic rationale:

1. **Provide free, easy-to-read, portable bus system maps.** MetroBus system maps cost \$1.50, one for DC-MD, one for DC-VA. MetroRail maps are free. While producing MetroBus system maps is more complex and costly, the public is fundamentally-entitled to free system maps to illustrate the bus route options available to take people where they want to go. Without easily-available, free system maps, the publicly-funded MetroBus will continue to be a significantly less viable option than it could be.
2. **Make maps available at more places.** Currently, they can be obtained at only three locations in all of DC, all within one mile of each other in NW: 1) Metro Center stop on MetroRail's Red Line; 2) Metro Headquarters, 600 Fifth Street, NW; and 3) The Map Store, 1636 I Street, NW. They should be available at bus/rail stations and public agency buildings. Private sector sponsorship and distribution of printed bus system maps are an additional option. New York City is just one example of a city that offers and even mails their bus system map for free upon request.
3. **Make public aware of availability of MetroBus on-line and printed system maps.** People don't know that bus system maps even exist. Their availability needs to be visibly-promoted on Metro's web site, on individual route schedules, on buses, and at bus stops and bus and rail stations.
4. **Make large bus system maps publicly-visible to promote familiarity.** a) Post the maps at *all* bus shelters, highlighting bus routes serving those shelters; b) Update and upgrade pole maps at all bus stops, and post visible bus route number and destination at all bus stops; c) Add area bus routes to Neighborhood Maps inside MetroRail stations; d) Install Neighborhood Map structures near MetroRail stations, showing area bus routes; and e) Add one DC-MD-VA bus system map on each MetroRail car.
5. **"Metro" must promote an *integrated* transit system that includes *both* MetroBus and MetroRail.** Use of the word "Metro" to refer only to MetroRail de-emphasizes MetroBus as a transportation option and must be discontinued: a) MetroRail kiosk staff and bus drivers must be able to inform the public about connecting with nearby bus *and* rail lines; b) Useful information about both systems must be available on buses and trains, and at stations; and c) Metro should further prod advertisers to include details on rail *and* bus stops serving their location. Since receiving this proposal in October 2002, Metro has posted previously-omitted directions to its headquarters by bus, and added an on-line bus system map www.wmata.com/metrobus/maps/dc.pdf. We need to continue this change in our mindset to provide the public with a more useful, truly integrated transit system.