

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

October 19, 2011

Zach Dobelbower, 2011 CAC Chair

The CAC meeting on October 15 included a briefing on the TPB's draft TIGER grant application, a briefing on the new "streamlined" version of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario, and an update on the development of a regional complete streets policy.

Briefing on the Draft Project Application for Funding Under the FY 2011 Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Competitive Grant Program

Eric Randall of the TPB staff briefed the committee. He explained that, in September, the TPB approved a pre-application for a TIGER grant. The TPB will be asked to approve the final application on October 19 for submission by October 31. The draft application includes seven projects to implement pedestrian and bicycle access improvements in rail station areas. Mr. Randall briefed the CAC on the development of the final application package, including design details of the local projects and estimates of their costs and benefits.

The CAC was generally supportive of the TIGER application. Members were specifically interested in the Forest Glen project, which would build a tunnel under Georgia Avenue to provide access to the Metrorail station essentially serving as a second entrance to the station. Members sought clarification as to whether a bridge had been considered at this site, whether the needs of bicyclists had been adequately addressed, and how much the project could be expected to reduce congestion. Several members emphasized the importance of the project, noting that the Beltway ramp empties extremely close to the crosswalk that the proposed tunnel would replace.

Regarding the overall draft grant application:

- The committee asked whether cost-benefit analysis had ranked the various projects within the proposal. Mr. Randall said that the Rockville, Fort Totten and Glenmont projects had preliminarily scored the highest in cost benefit analysis;
- The committee asked how the decision will be made about which projects to cut if U.S. DOT decides not to fund the entire application. Mr. Randall said the federal funders will make that decision.

Briefing on a Streamlined Version of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario

Erin Morrow of the TPB staff briefed the CAC. She said the full "CLRP Aspirations" scenario, which was completed and reported to the TPB in September 2010, integrates a regional network of toll lanes and bus rapid transit (BRT) with more concentrated growth in mixed-use activity centers. Her presentation provided the committee with the results of a sensitivity test of the

scenario that analyzes the impact of a lower-cost “streamlined” variably priced lane network with less new construction and more conversion of general purpose lanes to variably priced lanes.

CAC members raised a number of questions and concerns:

- ***Bus Rapid Transit***
 - ***Is BRT effective?*** Some members said it appeared that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which is a key component of the scenario, did not have a significant impact. Ms. Morrow and Mr. Kirby countered that they believed the impacts of BRT were substantial, producing an increase of more than 3% in transit use.
 - ***Where would BRT be most effective?*** Is there information on the locations where BRT would be most effective? Ms. Morrow said that information will be available in the future.
 - ***Include other/more express buses.*** The bus networks in the scenario are largely on freeways. Would it be possible for the scenario to include express bus services directly into the core? Mr. Kirby said that might be considered in the future.
 - ***Bus Rapid Transit makes sense.*** Members said that BRT could provide new alternatives for people who do not have cars. Furthermore, BRT could provide high-quality transit services in locations where rail is not going to be built “any time soon.”
- ***Relevance to the Priorities Plan.*** The CAC has a long-standing interest in ensuring that scenario planning is used to identify regional priorities that the TPB can officially endorse. Members asked how this scenario will relate to the development of the priorities plan whose development is supposed to begin this fall. Mr. Kirby answered that the scenario will be considered as part of the priorities planning process. He suggested that the scenario analysis might identify certain segments that make most sense to pursue first. Such segments might be incorporated into the priorities plan.

Update on the Development of a *Regional Complete Streets Policy*

Mr. Farrell of TPB staff presented the CAC with a draft “Regional Complete Streets Policy” for review and comment. The draft policy is a direct result of the CAC’s June 2011 recommendation that the TPB develop and approve a policy recognizing that streets in the region should be designed, built, and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities.

Mr. Farrell explained that the draft policy is based closely on the national complete streets policy awaiting Congressional review and approval. Even absent a federal law, Mr. Farrell noted that there is strong federal guidance for complete streets approaches, and that all three local DOTs

(VDOT, MDOT, and DDOT) have adopted some version of complete streets policies of varying levels of rigor. Several local jurisdictions in the region (including Arlington, Alexandria, Rockville, and Prince George's County) and many MPOs around the country have also adopted such policies.

The draft policy presented to the CAC uses language which requires (not just suggests) that the safety and convenience of all users be accommodated in accordance with Complete Streets principles in any federally-funded transportation project under the jurisdiction of the TPB. Mr. Farrell highlighted the draft policy's provisions regarding which projects are subject to the policy and what situations allow for an exemption from the policy. He also pointed out the documentation and reporting requirements included in the draft policy.

The next steps for the draft policy include a review and comment period during which TPB staff hope to receive feedback from the TPB's Bus Sub-Committee, Access for All Advisory Committee, and Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as each of the state agencies. If the feedback suggests that the draft policy is on the right track, it will move next to the TPB Technical Committee and then on to the full TPB.

Feedback provided by CAC members during the October 13 meeting centered on the lack of enforcement provisions in the current draft policy:

- ***Although the draft policy contains strong language, it needs more teeth.*** State and local agencies should be required to report on whether their projects comply with Complete Streets principles.
- ***TIP worksheets for projects should include checkboxes indicating compliance or exemption status.*** The Committee agreed that agencies should already be collecting the kind of data that would be needed to certify a project's compliance with the policy.
- ***Whether or not compliance status is used to approve or deny TIP projects, "compliance rates" could be used as performance measures for jurisdictions.*** The policy could encourage the reporting of compliance data in a way that compares the relative "compliance rates" of jurisdictions, which might encourage jurisdictions with lower compliance to promote more projects that incorporate Complete Streets designs.

Other Business

- Mr. Kirby briefed the CAC on the upcoming TPB agenda. Members were particularly interested in discussing the Street Smart program and whether bicyclist behavior should be more explicitly targeted.
- The final comment period for the 2011 Constrained Long-Range Plan was announced.
- Zach Dobelbower, CAC chair, announced that he would be moving to Denver later this year and would be resigning his chairmanship two months before the completion of his term. He said his last meeting would be in November.

ATTENDANCE
CAC Meeting, October 13, 2011

Members Present

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

Members Not Present

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

Alternates Present

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

Staff and Guests

- Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
- John Swanson, COG/TPB staff
- Ben Hampton, COG/TPB staff
- Mike Farrell, COG/TPB staff
- Eric Randall, COG/TPB staff
- Erin Morrow, COG/TPB staff
- Bill Orleans, citizen