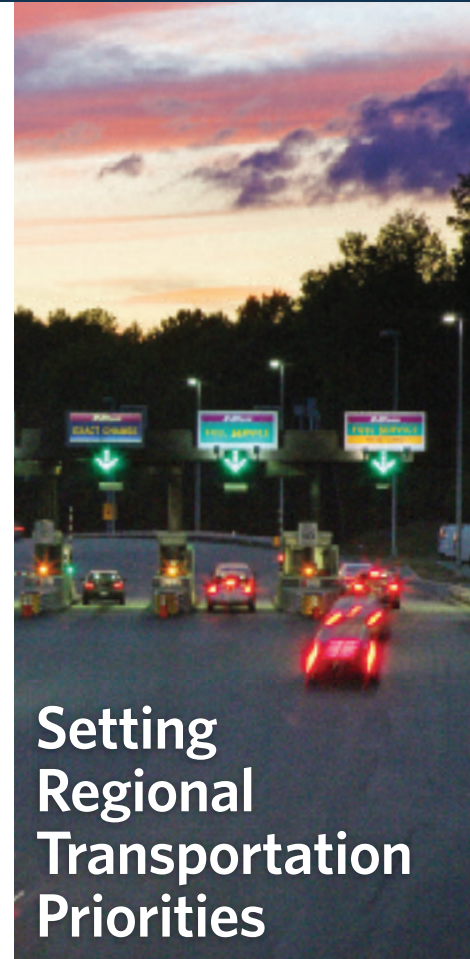


The Region

VOLUME 53 2014

Annual Review of
Transportation Issues
in the Washington
Metropolitan Region



Setting
Regional
Transportation
Priorities



What is the TPB?

Transportation planning at the regional level is coordinated in the Washington area by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia, and the District of Columbia, local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and nonvoting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies.

The TPB was created in 1965 by local and state governments in the Washington region to respond to a requirement of 1962 highway legislation for establishment of official Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in 1966, serving as COG's transportation policy committee. In consultation with its technical committee, the TPB is responsible for directing the continuing transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the states and local communities in the region.

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Table of Contents

- 2** In Memoriam: Ron Kirby
- 4** Message from the Chair
Hon. Scott York, Loudoun County
2013 TPB Chair
- 6** Approving the
*Regional Transportation
Priorities Plan*
In January 2014, the TPB
unanimously approved the
*Regional Transportation Priorities
Plan*, a strategic policy document
that aims to identify the top
strategies for addressing the
region’s most pressing
transportation challenges.
- 13** Land Use as a
Transportation Strategy
When it approved the *Regional
Transportation Priorities Plan*, the
TPB reiterated the important role
that changes in land-use can play
in alleviating roadway congestion
and transit crowding in the region.
- 18** Maintaining the Focus
on Freight
By 2040, regional planners expect
the amount of freight cargo
traveling to, from, within, or
through the Washington region to
grow by 66 percent, twice as much
as the region’s population and
employment. A continuing focus
on freight and freight planning will
be necessary to support continued
economic growth while mitigating
the congestion and environmental
impacts of the increased goods
movement it requires.
- 22** Seeing a Decline in
Driving
A number of TPB analyses in
2013 showed more signs of a
sustained decline in driving in the
region beginning midway through
the last decade. If the trend
continues, it could change the way
the region plans for its future
transportation needs.
- 26** Update on Major Regional
Transportation Projects
- 28** In Brief
- 28 Maryland and Virginia Begin
Allocating New Transportation
Revenues to Projects Awaiting
Funding
- 29 New “Information Hub” Helps
Residents Engage in
Transportation Decision-Making
- 30 Regional “Green Streets” Policy
Encourages Efforts to Limit
Impacts of Stormwater Runoff
- 31 TPB Selects 15 Local Projects to
Receive Federal “Transportation
Alternatives” Dollars
- 32 Federal Government Leading
Continued Growth in Teleworking
- 33 Grants to Improve Travel Options
for Low-Income Individuals and
Persons with Disabilities
- 34 Region Using Federal TIGER
Funding to Improve Reliability
and Convenience of Bus Transit

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In Memoriam: Ron Kirby

On the morning of November 12, 2013, word of Ron Kirby's sudden and unexpected death spread quickly among TPB staff, elected officials, journalists, and others throughout the Washington region. Soon that word spread to many other corners of the country and the world, to all of the places and to all of the people Ron touched throughout his life.

Shock and disbelief were how most people described their feelings in the hours and days afterward. Ron's death came at a time when he was playing a key role in the final stages of a three-year effort to identify the region's top transportation priorities, and just as the TPB was about to kick off a major update of the region's long-range transportation plan.

Ron Kirby joined the staff of the TPB in 1987 as director of transportation planning. For 26 years he led staff in supporting transportation decision-making in the region and he helped solidify the role of the TPB, and that of the Council of Governments more broadly, as a forum for regional

dialogue, discussion, and consensus-building.

Among the activities Ron directed at the TPB were numerous ongoing efforts to collect, analyze, and share data about the region's transportation system, like the TPB's periodic household travel surveys of individual travel behavior, or its triennial aerial traffic surveys of the region's freeways.

Ron also convened conferences, workshops, and meetings where officials and the public could share and discuss their ideas about transportation. In 1989, shortly after arriving at the TPB, he convened the first-ever Conference on Growth and Transportation. In 2003, he brought together local elected officials, business and community leaders, and transportation professionals for the first major public discussion about the need and opportunities for road-pricing strategies in the region.

In his work, Ron had a keen desire and ability to help everyone—staff, elected officials, the media, and engaged citizens—better understand

the transportation challenges and opportunities facing the region, so that we might make more informed decisions about our shared future.

Ron shared his knowledge in the pages of this publication for 26 years, authoring stories and serving as executive editor. He worked one-on-one with elected officials to help them better understand the complicated regional transportation planning process, especially federal requirements related to air quality, regional cooperation, and public engagement, among others.

Journalists came to Ron often for his perspective on the big transportation issues of the day, from traffic and tolls to Metro and land use, and more. In countless newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, feature stories in magazines, and even online chats, Ron graciously shared his vast knowledge about transportation, accumulated over several decades of study and work.

Ron was also an active leader in national transportation research and policy organizations, like the

Transportation Research Board and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, a group he helped found in 1994. His work with AMPO included advising members of Congress and their staff on issues related to metropolitan transportation planning.

And Ron provided extensive, informal counsel to local and state officials in the region working on major projects, like reconstruction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge across the Potomac River and construction of the Intercounty Connector in Maryland and the 495 Express Lanes in Virginia.

Back at the office, Ron enriched the professional and personal lives of those who worked with him and for him during his 26-year tenure. He was known for engaging one-on-one with junior- and mid-level staff, providing a rare opportunity for new and seasoned professionals alike to interact personally with one of the smartest and most respected transportation experts in the country.

Before coming to the TPB, Ron worked at the Urban Institute in



Washington, DC, where he directed research on innovative approaches to providing public transportation services and oversaw on-the-ground demonstrations of those approaches. He earned a PhD in Applied Mathematics from the University of Adelaide in Australia, where his research focused on improving the

algorithms used by computerized travel demand models. He is survived by his brother Neil and sister June, his wife Anne, his former wife Molly, and their two children, Marilyn and Josef.

Ron Kirby's mark on the TPB, his staff, the region, his family, and the world was great, and he is deeply missed.

Message from the Chair

Hon. Scott York, Loudoun County
2013 TPB Chair



In Loudoun County, we're eagerly awaiting the expansion of Metrorail service to Tysons Corner, Dulles Airport, and beyond. The Silver Line has been years in the making and will have significant and lasting regional impacts. Like other jurisdictions, we know that new roadways alone won't meet our county's growing transportation needs. So we're embracing other travel modes like transit, bicycling, and walking, as well as the idea of concentrating more development in mixed-use Activity Centers, as ways to help more of our residents get to jobs, to reach shopping and entertainment, and to enjoy a high quality of life.

Early in 2014, the TPB adopted the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*, a new policy framework that reflects this important way of thinking about transportation in our vibrant, growing region. The *Priorities Plan* calls for ways to use transportation infrastructure more effectively and to provide a range of travel options for more people, not just focusing on any one mode. There is broad regional agreement that that's

how we'll move the Washington region forward in the coming decades.

Another key to our region's economic strength and competitiveness will be the safe and efficient movement of goods, whether by air, sea, rail, or road. In Virginia, we're undertaking major efforts to improve freight access to Dulles Airport, where we're anticipating significant growth in air cargo traffic by 2040. Our partners in the District of Columbia are looking for ways to expand rail capacity across the Potomac River, both for freight and for commuter and intercity passenger rail.

In 2013, we continued our work to collect and analyze data about regional travel patterns. That work highlighted one particularly interesting trend for long-range planners: what appears to be a leveling off of growth in total driving in the region, even though our population continues to increase. That could be a sign that our efforts to provide alternatives to driving—for social, economic, and environmental reasons—are yielding benefits. And it could affect the way we plan for our

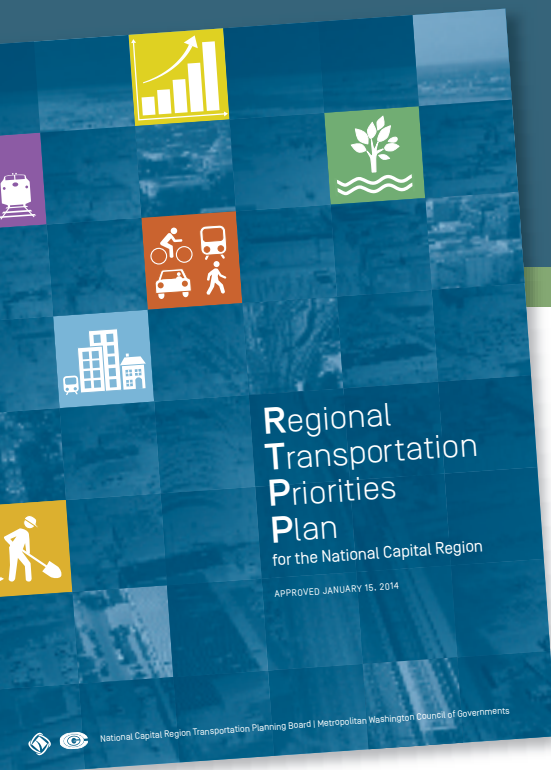
region's transportation future. We'll continue to study these trends and adjust our forecasts and planning activities accordingly.

A lot of good things happened in the transportation realm in 2013. But the past year was not without a great deal of sadness, too. We lost two dear colleagues: Karin Foster, who headed the TPB's freight planning work, and Ron Kirby, who served as the TPB's director of transportation planning for more than 26 years. These losses dealt a significant blow to the TPB and its staff. We search constantly for ways to honor these two highly respected individuals and to carry out the important work they both tirelessly performed in service to the region.

As we look forward to 2014, I am very optimistic. The TPB's continued work to coordinate regional transportation decision making and to advance the strategies and priorities spelled out in the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* will, I am certain, help to make our region a better place to live, to work, and to do business.



Approving the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*



Following almost three years of technical analysis, public outreach, and stakeholder involvement, the TPB in January 2014 unanimously approved the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*, a strategic policy document that aims to identify the top strategies for addressing the region's most pressing transportation challenges.

Conceived nearly four years ago by the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee as a way to focus decision-making on adopted regional transportation goals and objectives, the *Priorities Plan* identifies three key priorities on which local, state, and regional transportation agencies should focus their efforts to improve transportation and land use in the region.

Above all, the *Priorities Plan* calls for proper maintenance of the region's existing highway, bridge, and transit network, now and in the future. "Our very first priority should be to keep our existing transportation system in a state of good repair," the Plan says. "The infrastructure we've already built is the backbone of our economy and is the

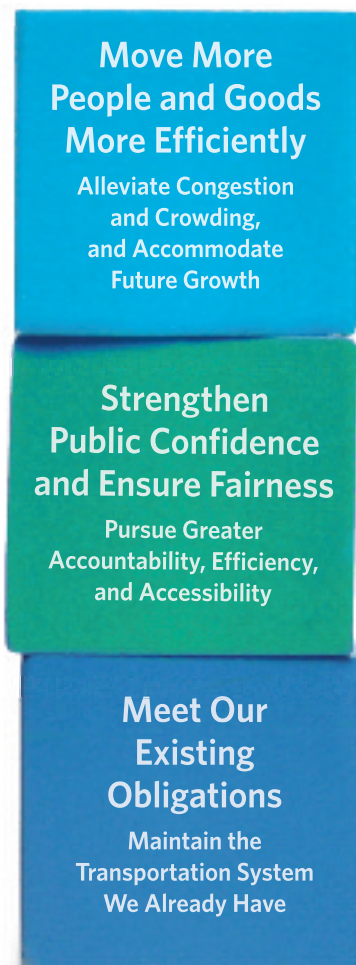
foundation for any improvements we make in the future."

In particular, the Plan says that the transportation agencies responsible for the region's roads and bridges should ensure that those facilities provide safe, reliable, and comfortable travel for people and goods. It says specifically that maintenance projects should be the first priority for use of available highway funding.

On the transit side, the Plan calls for keeping Metrorail, Metrobus, local bus, and commuter rail systems safe and in good working order. It says transit agencies should address any remaining backlogs of deferred maintenance, set up systems to address maintenance challenges as they arise, and work to secure dedicated, reliable sources of funding to ensure that future maintenance is carried out as needed.

In a public opinion survey carried out to help identify strategies that could garner broad political support, highway and transit maintenance received positive ratings from 90 percent of respondents, more than any other

Highway and transit maintenance received positive ratings from 90 percent of survey respondents, more than any other strategy in the Plan. Support was widespread among respondents from all parts of the region and regardless of whether they drive, take transit, or bike or walk.



THE THREE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE *PRIORITIES PLAN* ARE LIKE BUILDING BLOCKS, ALL ESSENTIAL IN ACHIEVING OUR SHARED GOALS FOR THE FUTURE.

strategy in the Plan. Support was widespread among respondents from all parts of the region and regardless of whether they drive, take transit, or bike or walk.

The second priority identified in the Plan is a package of strategies to strengthen public confidence and ensure fairness and equity. Public support is a prerequisite for any major or costly improvements to the transportation system, the Plan says. Taking care of obvious things first, making common-sense improvements, engaging citizens in the planning and decision-making process, and using technology to achieve greater efficiencies and communicate better with the public are all steps it recommends in order to win greater public support.

The second priority also includes improving access to transportation services, especially for traditionally disadvantaged groups—persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and persons with limited English proficiency. Doing so would help everyone use the

system with greater ease and contribute to and benefit from the region’s vibrant economy.

The third priority in the Plan concerns the nuts and bolts of transportation planning and engineering: how to move more people and goods more efficiently.

This priority aims to address congestion and crowding by increasing the capacity of the system as well as by alleviating demand on it. Targeted roadway improvements and other ways to smooth traffic flow can squeeze more capacity out of the existing road network in the short-term, while longer-term efforts, including express toll lanes on highways, cost-effective surface transit, and running more trains and buses on existing routes, would help accommodate future growth in travel.

Of equal importance in the third priority is alleviating demand on the existing system, in an effort to use the infrastructure we already have more efficiently. The Plan’s most significant recommendation is to concentrate more housing and job development in mixed-use Activity Centers, especially



near transit, to make it possible for more people to take advantage of alternatives to driving. And focusing attention on Activity Centers on the eastern side of the region would help ensure greater socioeconomic equity and redistribute travel patterns to take greater advantage of existing unused road and transit capacity.

The *Priorities Plan* is designed to assist local, state, and regional leaders in “thinking regionally and acting locally”—that is, in considering regional needs when identifying transportation improvements to advance to implementation. The Plan says that as transportation agencies in the region submit projects and programs for inclusion in the region’s Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), the TPB and the public will have an opportunity to review, assess, and discuss the relationship of those submissions to the priorities in the Plan. It also says that the TPB will, in the future, work collaboratively with the region’s jurisdictions to develop a process by which each jurisdiction will

describe, in a formal letter or other documentation, the ways in which their submissions address the priorities.

How the *Priorities Plan* Was Developed

The TPB developed the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* over the course of nearly three years, through a combination of technical analysis, public outreach, and stakeholder involvement.

The idea for a *Priorities Plan* originated from the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) more than seven years ago as a way to focus transportation decision-making on adopted regional goals and objectives. In response to the CAC’s recommendation, the TPB in May 2010 hosted an event called the “Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities,” which generated broad interest among TPB stakeholders in developing a *priorities plan*. In July 2010 the TPB set up a task force to determine the scope and process for developing such a plan.

A year later, in July 2011, the TPB

kicked off development of the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* when it voted to adopt the scope and process developed by the task force. The scope specified that the plan would identify transportation strategies that could be recognized throughout the region as offering the greatest potential contributions to addressing continuing regional challenges. It also said the plan would support efforts to incorporate those strategies into future updates of the CLRP in the form of specific programs and projects. And it stipulated that public participation would be sought at every stage of development.

Throughout 2012, the TPB engaged stakeholders and members of the general public in numerous outreach activities to learn more about how best to communicate the concepts and materials slated to be part of the Plan. In particular, the TPB hosted a number of listening sessions with regional stakeholders and citizen representatives in early 2012 to solicit feedback on an initial set of regional challenges that



The idea for a *Priorities Plan* originated from the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee more than seven years ago as a way to focus transportation decision-making on adopted regional goals and objectives.

would serve as the basis for identifying the region's top transportation strategies. The listening sessions were also intended to provide guidance and input on framing identified challenges that were presented to the public during subsequent outreach phases.

A citizens forum, held in June 2012, helped assess whether draft challenges and strategies developed by staff were meaningful to the general public, and if there were any additional challenges or strategies that participants could suggest. The format of the forum utilized a public outreach model known as a deliberative forum, which allows citizens to learn about issues, share their thoughts via small group discussions and real-time polling, and hear from their peers.

The outreach activities in 2012 helped staff further refine the challenges and strategies that would eventually make up the *Priorities Plan*, shifting away from a more technically oriented planning approach to one based more on narrative text, simple charts, and pictures to describe

Development of the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*

May 2010 "Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities"

July 2010–July 2011 *Priorities Plan* Scoping Task Force meets.

July 2011 TPB approves "Scope and Process" for developing the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*.

Early 2012 Listening sessions with regional stakeholders and citizen representatives

June 2012 Citizens Forum to test early priorities plan concepts and materials with the general public

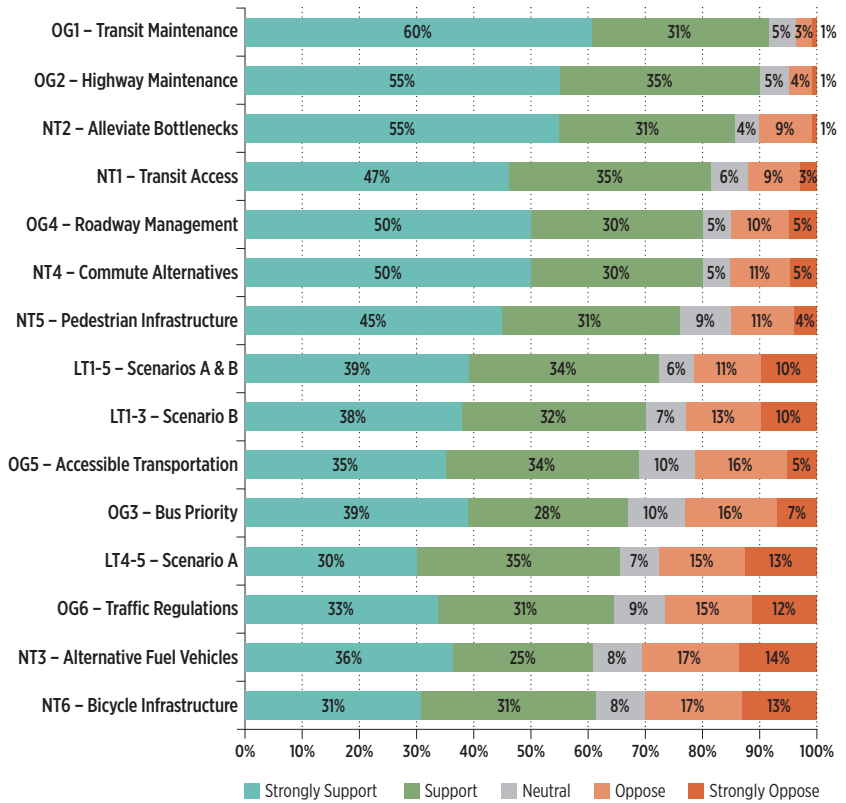
April–July 2013 Online public opinion survey to gather input on the region's most pressing challenges and strategies to address them

July 2013 First draft of the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* presented to the TPB and released for public comment

Fall 2013 Additional work to refine *Priorities Plan*, including stakeholder outreach

January 2014 TPB unanimously approves *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIES IN THE PRIORITIES PLAN



Note: Scenario A combined Express Toll Lanes on All Major Highways with Bus Rapid Transit on Toll Lanes. Scenario B combined Concentrated Growth in Activity Centers, Increased Capacity on Rail and Bus Lines, and Expanded Circulation in Activity Centers. Scenario A+B combined all five long-term strategies into one scenario.

THE MOST SUPPORTED STRATEGIES IN THE PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY CARRIED OUT FOR THE *PRIORITIES PLAN* WERE THOSE THAT ADDRESSED TRANSIT MAINTENANCE AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE. BOTH STRATEGIES GARNERED SUPPORT FROM 90 PERCENT OR MORE OF PARTICIPANTS.

challenges and potential strategies to address them.

In the spring and summer of 2013, the TPB undertook an online public opinion survey to determine what average citizens find to be the greatest continuing transportation challenges in the region, and which strategies to address those challenges could garner broad public support.

The survey used MetroQuest public engagement software, which allowed the survey to be visually engaging and educational. It also provided an apparatus for collecting and processing opinion data from a large segment of the region’s residents.

More than 600 randomly selected individuals took the survey between April and July of 2013. Rigorous statistical weighting techniques were used to eliminate bias in the survey sample. With a few exceptions, the weighted sample reflected quite well the age, gender, income, race and ethnicity, and travel characteristics of the region’s population.

In general, the survey showed

agreement that all of the major transportation challenges presented were standing in the way of achieving regional goals. The most supported strategies in the survey were those that addressed transit maintenance and highway maintenance, indicating that the public is largely unified in backing efforts to maintain our existing infrastructure. When asked about

funding, respondents favored identifying new dedicated revenue for transit maintenance more than any other strategy.

The survey also highlighted the importance of three other issues: a general lack of confidence in public agencies to make good use of the resources available to them; widespread support for greater use of public

The purpose of the *Priorities Plan* is to encourage local, state, and regional leaders to consider regional needs when identifying transportation improvements to advance to implementation.

information campaigns on such issues as transportation funding and commute alternatives; and a need for robust public engagement when proposing significant land-use changes in the region.

These results helped in the process of reviewing and refining many of the goals, challenges, and strategies that were ultimately included in the Plan, and helped to shape the three key priorities identified in the Plan.

Implementing Regional Transportation Priorities

The *Priorities Plan* recognizes that implementation of specific transportation projects and programs that might be supportive of the priorities spelled out in the Plan is the responsibility of local, state, and regional agencies, and that those agencies are also responsible for conceiving and developing such initiatives.

As such, the purpose of the *Priorities Plan* is to assist local, state, and regional leaders in considering regional needs



when identifying transportation improvements to advance to implementation.

In 2014, TPB staff will work to develop a system for assessing the degree to which the specific projects and programs in the CLR support the strategies and priorities spelled out in

the *Priorities Plan*. The assessment will also aim to evaluate how well the region is doing more broadly in achieving those goals and objectives. These steps will help leaders better understand the challenges that still exist and opportunities to further improve the region's transportation system.

Preparing for the 2014 CLRP Update

Local, state, and regional transportation agencies were busy in late 2013 and early 2014 preparing for the next major four-year update to the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP).

As agencies submit projects and programs for inclusion in the CLRP, the TPB will have an opportunity to review, assess, and discuss the degree to which the projects support the priorities spelled out in the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*. The public will also have opportunities throughout the update process to comment on how well any of the submission support regional priorities.

The TPB updates the CLRP every year to reflect changing policy and funding realities at the local, state, regional, and federal levels. The updates typically include additions of new projects for which funding has become available. Sometimes agencies change projects that are already in the plan, or remove some projects altogether.

In 2012, a new bus rapid transit (BRT) line between the Van Dorn Street and Pentagon Metrorail stations and a new bypass highway around the Manassas

Battlefield were added to the plan. In 2013, the District added a number of lane-reduction or reconfiguration projects. As part of the early stages of the 2014 update, the District proposed adding new streetcar lines to the plan, Maryland proposed adding a new interchange at the Greenbelt Metrorail station and upgrades to its MARC commuter rail system, and Virginia proposed commuter rail improvements as well as a few road-widening projects.

TPB staff will be developing a system for assessing how well the projects and programs in the CLRP, taken as a whole, support regional priorities, as well as to assess how well the region is doing more broadly in achieving shared regional goals for transportation.

An important feature of the 2014 CLRP update will be a revised financial analysis, required under

federal regulations every four years. The financial analysis will reassess the total amount of funding that is "reasonably expected to be available" through the horizon year of the plan—2040.

The financial analysis requires input from all three states, WMATA, and other local and regional partners. In the last financial analysis, conducted as part of the 2010 CLRP update, the region identified nearly \$223 billion in available funding, generated from sources including federal and state fuel taxes and state and local vehicle registration fees, among others. The results of the next financial analysis will be available later in 2014 and will serve as the basis for the full 2014 CLRP update.



Land Use as a Transportation Strategy



Not all of the top strategies for addressing the Washington region's most significant transportation challenges will require traditional infrastructure expansions, things like road widening, adding more transit service, or installing new bike lanes or sidewalks.

When it approved the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* in January 2014, the TPB reiterated the important role that changes in land use can play in alleviating roadway congestion and transit crowding, two of the challenges the public identified in a TPB survey as being the region's most significant. The Plan basically says that land use is a key strategy in addressing our region's transportation challenges.

In particular, the *Priorities Plan* calls for concentrating a greater share of future residential and commercial development in mixed-use Activity Centers, preferably near current or planned high-capacity transit lines. The Plan says that this will help shorten daily commutes by moving housing and jobs closer together and allow more people to bike, walk, or take transit to meet more of their daily needs.



In 2013, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments designated 141 existing urban centers, priority development areas, transit hubs, suburban town centers, and traditional towns throughout the region as Activity Centers. Nearly seven in ten of the 141 centers are currently served by Metrorail, commuter rail, light rail, or streetcar, or will be by 2040 under current plans.

Taking advantage of high-capacity transportation connections between centers, especially connections that are already in place, helps move more people more efficiently. The *Priorities Plan* says doing so is necessary in an era of limited financial resources and a lack of a political will to raise significant amounts of new revenue for major infrastructure expansions.

The *Priorities Plan* also calls for enhancing local circulation in Activity Centers—by expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, providing more local bus services, and promoting better street connectivity—enabling more people who live or work in them

to make fewer and shorter trips by automobile.

With these local improvements, and if development happens where planners expect it will, a recent TPB analysis says that the greatest increases in regional travel by transit, walking, and biking between now and 2040 will occur in travel to, from, and within Activity Centers. By 2040, the analysis says, half of all trips on foot or by bicycle will occur in Activity Centers, which represent just 9 percent of the region's land area.

In calling for greater concentration of growth in Activity Centers and enhanced local circulation, the *Priorities Plan* recognizes that not all Activity Centers will look, feel, and operate alike. "An Activity Center in Loudoun County will not look like one in the District of Columbia, but both places can be less auto-dependent, and more walkable and economically vibrant," the Plan says.

Focusing on Activity Centers holds other opportunities to improve quality of life and take greater advantage of existing infrastructure. According to the *Priorities Plan*, "paying particular

attention to transit-oriented Activity Centers on the eastern side of the region can improve socioeconomic balance by supporting job growth and commercial activity in areas that currently lack it." And focusing development in these suburban areas can also help take advantage of unused capacity in the transit system by filling seats on trains currently operating below capacity in reverse-commute directions.

A Toolkit for Strengthening the Region's Activity Centers

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in January 2014 approved *Place + Opportunity: Strategies for Creating Great Communities and a Stronger Region*. The report provides a toolkit of strategies designed to strengthen the region's Activity Centers—by expanding economic and social opportunity for the people who live, work, or do business in them. The report is meant to complement local planning and development efforts to make the region's 141 Activity Centers

The report presents a set of development goals, strategies, and tools to address the needs and build on the assets of centers in each place type and opportunity type.



PLACE + OPPORTUNITY PROVIDES A TOOLKIT OF STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN THE REGION'S ACTIVITY CENTERS—BY EXPANDING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK, OR DO BUSINESS IN THEM.

more attractive and successful, whether they're highly urban places, suburban town centers, or traditional towns.

Place + Opportunity categorizes each center into one of six "place types" and one of four "opportunity types," based on shared market conditions, urban form, and socioeconomic characteristics. The classification system is designed to identify common needs and support strategic investment and development to help communities meet their aspirations for their Activity Centers. The report presents a set of development goals, strategies, and tools to address the needs and build on the

assets of centers in each place type and opportunity type.

The place types in the report reflect development patterns and market conditions in centers, based on attributes like the mix of land uses, residential and office rents, intensity of development, and walkability. Opportunity types reflect the social and economic characteristics of the centers, taking into account existing or planned job access via transit, housing affordability, income diversity, and concentrations of low-income households.

One of the Activity Centers highlighted in the report is the City of



Like the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, Place + Opportunity* is designed to be a resource to assist local decision-makers in developing improvements to their local communities that also benefit the entire region.



Manassas, which is classified as a “satellite city” place type and a “stable” opportunity type. That means it is located on the edge of existing regional activity, already has a mix of nearby uses and activities, has moderate

income diversity and housing affordability, and has low job access by transit. In places like these, the report calls for strategies that include greater branding and marketing to take advantage of existing desirable market and urban form characteristics, like its walkability and traditional downtown development pattern.

The NoMa neighborhood in the District of Columbia is a center featured in the report classified as an “urban center” place type and a “connected core” opportunity type. In places like these, the report recommends leveraging strong existing real estate markets and physical infrastructure, especially proximity to Metrorail and good pedestrian connectivity, to expand housing affordability and provide high-quality pedestrian amenities and public spaces.

The other place types in the report capture the range of places between urban centers and satellite cities, including “suburban multi-use centers” and “close-in and urbanizing centers,” among others. The remaining

opportunity types capture “transforming” and “transitioning” neighborhoods, which have greater housing affordability and income diversity. Many transforming and transitioning centers are located along corridors where new transit facilities are planned, like Columbia Pike in Virginia or the Purple Line corridor in Maryland, and the report recommends prioritizing investments in neighborhood affordability to preserve existing assets.

Like the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, Place + Opportunity* is designed to be a resource to assist local decision-makers in developing improvements to their local communities that also benefit the entire region.

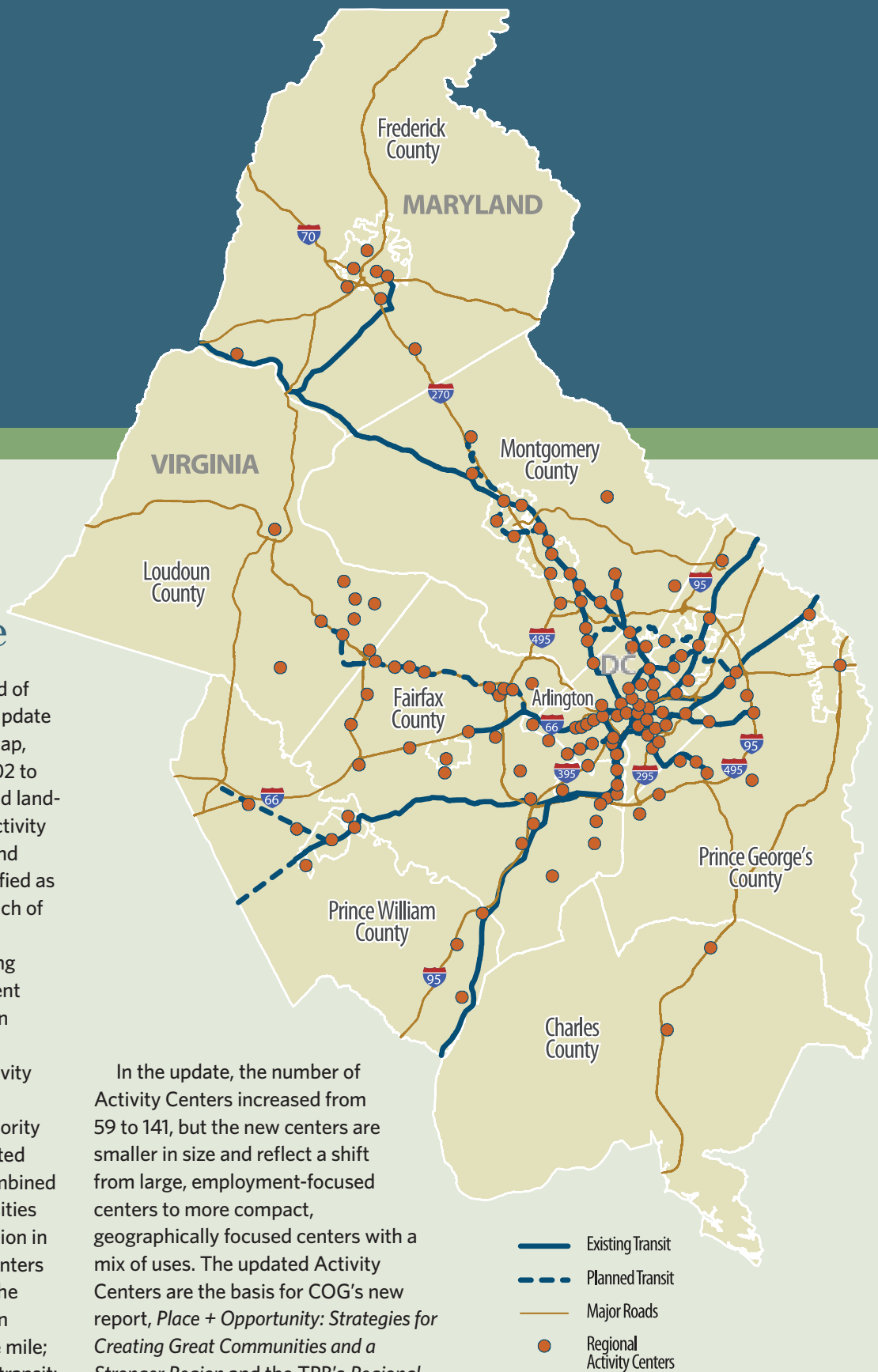
In approving *Place + Opportunity* in January, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has provided a toolkit of strategies for strengthening the region’s Activity Centers in ways that expand economic and social opportunity and help the region achieve long-term transportation goals for moving more people more efficiently and improving quality of life.

2013 Activity Centers Update

In January 2013, the COG Board of Directors approved a significant update of the regional Activity Centers map, which COG first developed in 2002 to help coordinate transportation and land-use planning in the region. The Activity Centers are areas that planners and other regional leaders have identified as places that will accommodate much of the region's future growth and development. They include existing urban centers, priority development areas, transit hubs, suburban town centers, and traditional towns.

In the most recent update, Activity Centers are places that local jurisdictions have identified as priority growth areas in their locally adopted land-use plan and which have combined population and employment densities above the median for the jurisdiction in which they're located. Activity Centers are also places that meet two of the following four criteria: intersection densities of at least 55 per square mile; existing or planned high-capacity transit; mixed-use development or zoning to allow it; or combined housing and transportation costs that do not exceed 45 percent of regional median income.

In the update, the number of Activity Centers increased from 59 to 141, but the new centers are smaller in size and reflect a shift from large, employment-focused centers to more compact, geographically focused centers with a mix of uses. The updated Activity Centers are the basis for COG's new report, *Place + Opportunity: Strategies for Creating Great Communities and a Stronger Region* and the TPB's *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan*. They will also continue to be used for regional growth forecasts, transportation modeling, and demographic analysis.



Maintaining the Focus on Freight



By 2040, regional planners expect the amount of freight cargo traveling to, from, within, or through the Washington region to grow by 66 percent, twice as much as the region's population and employment.

A number of factors will drive this increase, including regional and national economic growth, and changes in where companies make goods and how they distribute them. The region's vibrant service-based economy will rely on more truck deliveries to and from wholesale, retail, and service businesses. Continued growth in e-commerce will mean more truck deliveries to residences, too. And an expansion of the Panama Canal, scheduled to be completed in late 2015, will allow much larger "Post-Panamax" ships from Asia to serve nearby East Coast ports, including those in Baltimore and the Hampton Roads area in Virginia. Much of the new cargo arriving at these ports will pass through the Washington region by truck or rail on its way to inland destinations.

A continuing focus on freight and

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Highlighting Major Efforts to Improve Goods Movement in the Region

In 2013, TPB's Freight Subcommittee updated its "top ten" list of road, rail, and other initiatives needed to improve goods movement. The list, first developed in 2011, includes a mix of short-term and long-term projects in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Its aim is to highlight projects that the states and major freight railroads in the region are pursuing and funding, or have begun to study, but that aren't necessarily included in regional transportation plans.

One of the most significant projects on the list is reconstruction of the CSX rail tunnel under Virginia Avenue SE in the District to accommodate double-

track, double-stack freight trains. Currently, only trains carrying single-stacked cargo containers can use the 100-year-old tunnel due to height restrictions, and those trains must often queue at either end while waiting to use the tunnel's single track. The current tunnel is a major bottleneck for freight traffic on the East Coast and creates back-ups interfering with Amtrak, MARC, and VRE passenger trains leaving or approaching Union Station. Reconstruction of the tunnel is part of CSX's larger "National Gateway" initiative to clear dozens of major obstacles or bottlenecks in six mid-Atlantic and Midwestern states.

Local residents and community groups have expressed concerns about the Virginia Avenue tunnel reconstruction project and its effects on the nearby neighborhood. All interested parties, including CSX, the District Department of Transportation, local residents and community groups, and the Federal Highway Administration, which is overseeing the federal environmental review process for the

project, will have to work together to determine the best way forward.

The TPB Freight Subcommittee's "top ten" list also focuses on improving truck freight movement, especially along critical highway corridors that link airports and seaports to major markets. In Virginia, for example, the state plans to upgrade the 18-mile "loop road" around Dulles Airport, where air freight by tonnage is expected to double by 2040. The "top ten" list emphasizes, in particular, a nearly five-mile stretch of VA 606, which the state plans to widen first to four lanes and eventually to six as one of three main segments of the full loop.

In Maryland, officials are working to increase the availability of truck parking along key freight routes to address a current shortage of spaces. Truck parking facilities are important for highway safety because truck drivers need places to rest at regular intervals to maintain alertness while driving. Proposed changes to federal regulations will require truck drivers to take longer breaks, and to take more breaks during

Several of the alternatives provide new river crossings for a variety of other transportation modes. One adds a path for pedestrians and cyclists, while others add room for streetcars and local automobile traffic.



nighttime hours. This will increase the need for truck parking spaces in the future. Virginia is also studying ways to increase the availability of parking for trucks along its major freight routes.

Finally, the District of Columbia has plans to launch a new real-time motor carrier information system to provide drivers of commercial trucks and tour buses with up-to-date information on traffic conditions and the availability of commercial loading zones and bus parking spaces. The new tool is intended to help move trucks and tour buses more efficiently through the District and mitigate the impacts of truck and bus traffic on surrounding neighborhoods.

Other priorities on the list include broad efforts to alleviate bottlenecks and reduce congestion along critical corridors, like I-495/95 in Maryland, and I-95 and US 1 in Virginia. It also includes rail upgrades near Manassas that are part of Norfolk Southern's multi-state "Crescent Corridor" initiative to increase capacity and efficiency on its major East Coast routes.

Expanding the Long Bridge: Planning for Growth in Freight, Passenger, and Commuter Rail

One of the key long-term projects on the TPB Freight Subcommittee's "top ten" list is the potential expansion or replacement of CSX's Long Bridge. The region's ability to accommodate anticipated growth in freight, passenger, and commuter rail traffic in coming decades will depend in part on the future of the 2,500-foot span between the District of Columbia and Virginia that serves as the region's only Potomac River freight rail crossing.

Built in 1904, the Long Bridge connects the rail networks of the District, Maryland, and the Northeast to Virginia and points south. Freight and passenger rail traffic up and down the East Coast, and between Virginia and the District, must share the two-track crossing.

About 90 trains use the Long Bridge on an average weekday. Around a third of those are freight trains operated by CSX, the bridge's owner. The remaining

two-thirds are VRE commuter trains connecting the Northern Virginia suburbs with job centers closer to the urban core, or Amtrak intercity passenger trains serving East Coast destinations.

Freight and passenger trains currently share the Long Bridge's two tracks with relatively few schedule conflicts. But growing demand for freight and passenger traffic in coming decades will lead to further strain, especially since CSX, the bridge's private owner, will retain the right to prioritize its own freight traffic over passenger traffic should the market demand it.

That's why planners at the District Department of Transportation, in a study funded by the Federal Railroad Administration, have examined various alternatives for expanding the bridge's capacity. DDOT's study began with over 100 alternative configurations, which were narrowed to just six alternatives through a process that included input from the public and various other stakeholders, including CSX, VRE, and Amtrak. Stakeholders emphasized that improvements to the bridge should

THE LONG BRIDGE IS THE REGION'S ONLY POTOMAC RIVER FREIGHT RAIL CROSSING.



increase total capacity as well as make accommodations for double-stacked and electrified trains, and eventually high-speed rail.

All of the alternatives but one—a “no build” option required to be considered as part of such studies—would double the bridge’s capacity from the two existing tracks to four. Some officials have called for separating freight and passenger traffic completely so as to eliminate scheduling conflicts that might hinder the expansion of passenger rail service.

In addition to extra tracks, several of the alternatives provide new river crossings for a variety of other transportation modes. One adds a path for pedestrians and cyclists, while others add room for streetcars and local automobile traffic.

Improvements to the Long Bridge corridor are not anticipated to be made in the near future, as it remains to be seen whether CSX, the passenger railroads, or the states will take the lead in funding and constructing any expansions. Action will also require extensive collaboration among these

and other organizations and agencies, including the National Park Service and the Coast Guard.

As the region’s only freight and passenger rail crossing of the Potomac River, the Long Bridge is a critical link in the region’s transportation system as well

as along the East Coast. Future growth of freight, passenger, and commuter rail services in the region—and the economic activity that such services support—will depend, at least in part, on the future of the Long Bridge and its ability to handle these new demands.

In Memoriam: Karin Foster



In late 2013, the TPB and its staff mourned the loss of colleague Karin Foster, who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on September 30.

Karin oversaw the TPB’s regional freight planning work and served as the primary liaison to regional freight stakeholders—railroads, seaports, airports, shipping companies, and state and local departments of transportation—during her six-year tenure as a member of the TPB staff.

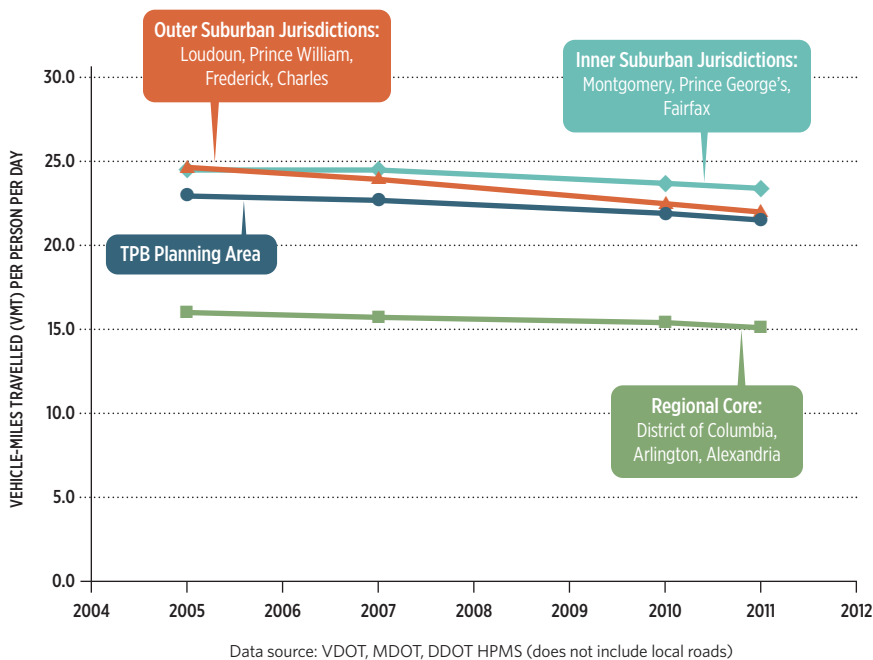
As part of her responsibilities, Karin supported the TPB’s Freight Subcommittee. In her work with the subcommittee, she was instrumental in convening the first-ever regional Freight Forum in 2011. She also aided the development of the subcommittee’s “Highlighted Freight Projects List,” which is updated periodically to draw attention to ongoing efforts by the states and major freight railroads in the region to improve the safe and efficient movement of goods.

Karin was a diligent, enthusiastic, and steadfast worker, a highly respected colleague, and a reliable friend. She touched the lives of many people around the region, and she is deeply missed.

Seeing a Decline in Driving



AVERAGE DAILY DRIVING PER PERSON IN THE WASHINGTON REGION, 2005-2011



For More Information: The data on trends in daily driving per person in the region were presented to the TPB in June 2013 as part of an update on the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2013 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRTP). The data were used to validate the models the TPB uses to forecast future travel patterns and vehicle emissions. For more information, go to www.mwcog.org or email info@mwcog.org.

A number of TPB analyses in 2013 showed more signs of a sustained decline in driving in the region beginning midway through the last decade. If the trend continues, it could change the way the region plans for its future transportation needs.

One analysis of annual travel data provided by the Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia departments of transportation showed a 6 percent drop in average daily driving per person between 2005 and 2011—from 22.9 miles a day in 2005 to 21.5 miles a day in 2011—reversing a decades-long trend of ever-increasing driving.

Average daily driving per person is calculated using total vehicle-miles traveled per day divided by total population. According to the analysis, the Washington region's population grew by nearly 350,000 people to around 5.1 million—an increase of 7 percent—while total daily driving saw almost no change, holding more or less steady at around 110 million vehicle-miles a day.

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The biggest declines in driving occurred in the region's outer suburban jurisdictions—Frederick, Charles, Loudoun, and Prince William counties—where the daily averages fell from 24.6 miles a day in 2005 to 22 miles a day in 2011—an 11 percent drop.

The next biggest declines came in the core jurisdictions of Arlington, Alexandria, and the District of Columbia, slipping 6 percent to 15.1 miles a day.

The smallest change, as a percentage, came in the region's inner suburban jurisdictions of Fairfax, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties, where daily driving fell about 5 percent, to 23.4 miles a day.

The downward trends throughout the region reflect a similar trend occurring at the national level, where total annual driving per person peaked in 2004 and has fallen each year since.

In the past, analysts have attributed such changes mainly to fluctuations in overall economic conditions: weaker economies lead to short-term declines

in driving while stronger economies lead to increases.

However, the most recent decline—which has continued longer than any other in history—began before the current economic slowdown got its start in 2007. This suggests that other forces are at play, like heightened sensitivity to fuel price volatility, more widespread use of e-commerce and electronic communications, and increased telecommuting. Shifting preferences toward less travel by car, especially among younger generations, might also be contributing to the change.

Another 2013 TPB analysis, this one of commuting data collected by the US Census Bureau, showed a similar trend among commuters who are slowly shifting away from driving alone as their primary method of getting to and from work.

In its analysis, the TPB found that the share of commute trips made by people driving single-occupancy vehicles in the Washington region declined slightly between 2000 and 2011, from 67 percent of trips to 66 percent.

Declining shares of solo driving

occurred in almost every major jurisdiction in the region, but the biggest drops came in the District of Columbia and Montgomery, Prince George's, and Arlington counties. In the District, the share of solo driving dropped from 39 percent to 33 percent.

The data suggest that the shift away from solo driving—and from carpooling, which the data also show—was mostly toward public transit. Regionwide, the share of trips made primarily by transit—Metrorail, commuter rail, and local and express bus service—increased markedly, from 12 percent to 15 percent. The District, Arlington, and Prince George's County all saw gains of seven percentage points or more in the transit mode share between 2000 and 2011. Federal workers in the region had the largest increase in transit use from 2000 to 2011, growing from 19 percent in 2000 to 28 percent in 2011.

Biking also became a more popular travel mode over the last ten years. Regionally, 0.7 percent of commute trips in 2011 were by bicycle, up from 0.3 percent in 2000. This growth reflects about 11,000 new bicycle commute trips.



The District saw the largest increase in bicycle share regionally, with only 1.4 percent of commuters biking to work in 2000 and 3.5 percent biking to work in 2011. The share of trips made on foot—about 3 percent—remained steady.

The trends suggest that the region’s investment in options like transit, bicycling, and walking could be paying off, and that increasing roadway congestion is making other alternatives look more attractive.

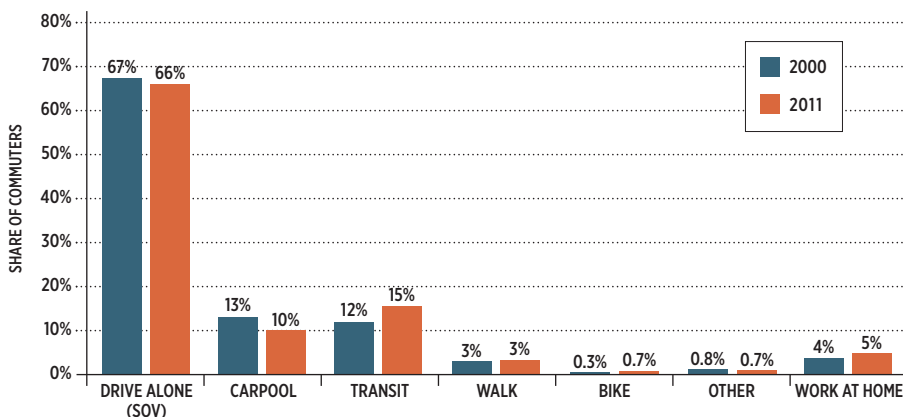
Looking Ahead: What These Changes Mean For the Future

In light of the changes in travel patterns observed over the last decade, planners looking ahead to the future must think about how the region’s transportation system can and should respond to changes in demand for various modes of travel.

The TPB recently updated its travel forecasting models to reflect the changes observed in the states’ travel data and the commuting data from the US Census Bureau. It also revised its estimates of the share of non-motorized trips that will be made in Activity Centers in the region, based on new evidence, gathered through the TPB’s geographically focused household travel surveys, that these shares are higher than previously thought.

According to the latest runs of the TPB’s travel models, the share of people who drive alone to and from work each day is expected to fall

**HOW COMMUTERS TRAVELLED TO AND FROM WORK
IN THE WASHINGTON REGION, 2000 AND 2011**



Data source: 2000 Decennial Census, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS), US Census Bureau.

For More Information: The data on changes in how commuters travel to and from work were presented to the TPB in May 2013 following the release of the latest American Community Survey data by the US Census Bureau. For more information, go to www.mwcog.org or email info@mwcog.org.

The data suggest that the shift away from solo driving and carpooling was mostly toward public transit.

between now and 2040—about an additional four percentage points in all. The share of people who carpool will increase by three percentage points, while the share by bicycle or on foot will increase slightly. The share of people who take transit is expected to remain roughly the same as today.

Although the share of people who drive alone is expected to fall, rising population will still result in some 450,000 new trips by solo drivers. The region can expect about 240,000 more carpool trips, and a similar number of new trips by transit. About 80,000 new trips a day will be made by bicycle or on foot.

These changes are an important reflection of emerging trends in how people are likely to get around the region in the future.

The TPB's travel forecasting models take into account a wide range of assumptions about the relative availability and attractiveness of various travel options in predicting what modes people will use. Among other things, the models take into

account trip costs and travel time, which include things like transit fares, fuel prices, parking costs, and tolls, as well as time spent not only traveling but also parking one's car, waiting for buses or trains, transferring between lines, or walking to one's final destination.

Changes in these factors are expected to vary throughout the region over the next 30 years. In the regional core, the share of trips made by solo driving and transit are expected to decline in favor of biking and walking. In the inner suburban jurisdictions, the share of trips made by solo drivers will fall somewhat, while small increases in the share of trips by transit, bicycling, and walking are expected.

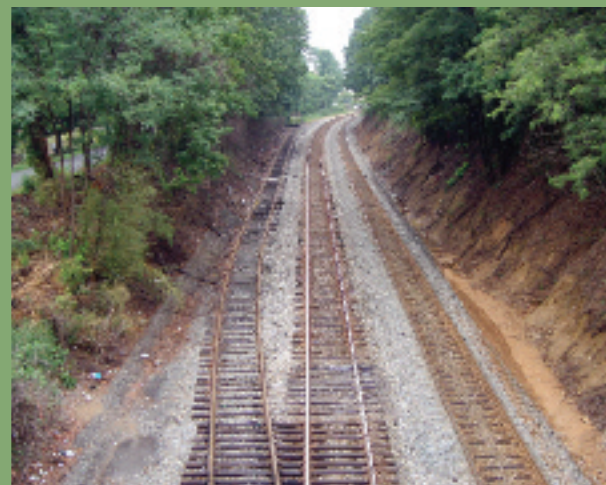
In the region's outer suburban jurisdictions, new transit options like the Silver Line, increasing highway congestion, new high-occupancy toll lanes, and expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are expected to encourage a greater share of people to commute by modes other than driving alone. The share of commute

trips made by solo drivers is forecast to fall from 79 percent to 70 percent in these areas over the next 30 years, while the share of trips by carpool will increase from 15 percent to 20 percent and the share of trips by transit will increase from 5 percent to 9 percent.

As the region continues to grow, and as its transportation system continues to evolve, the modes of travel people use to get to and from work will change based on the relative availability and attractiveness of various options. Planners and decision-makers can encourage further shifts by taking steps to make desired modes more available and more attractive to potential travelers.

Whether the downward trend in driving per person observed over the last several years continues, especially after the national economy recovers, remains to be seen. Through its various data collection and analysis efforts, the TPB will continue to monitor travel patterns to assess underlying trends and adjust its forecasts and planning activities accordingly.

Update on Major Regional Transportation Projects



Silver Line VIRGINIA

At the end of 2013, the region was still awaiting the opening of the first phase of the Silver Line Metrorail extension through Tysons Corner to Reston. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, which was responsible for building the 11.7-mile facility, was preparing to hand it over to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for testing. The line was previously anticipated to be open by the end of 2013, but a late-2014 opening is now more likely.

The first phase of the Silver Line is the first major extension of the Metrorail system since 2004, when the Blue Line extension to Largo Town Center was completed. By 2018 the Silver Line is expected to reach Dulles Airport and Loudoun County. Metrorail access to Dulles was conceived many decades ago, but the Silver Line project didn't enter the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) until 1999. Construction started ten years later, in 2009.

Purple Line MARYLAND

Another major transit project awaiting implementation is the Purple Line, a planned 16-mile light rail link between Bethesda and New Carrollton connecting four Metrorail lines radiating from the regional core into the Maryland suburbs. The project entered the CLRP in 2009. In 2013, the project achieved several important milestones, including an August announcement by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley that the state would pursue a public-private partnership to build and operate the line. O'Malley also announced a commitment of several hundred million dollars in additional state funding for the line thanks to revenue increases enacted by the General Assembly earlier in the year. In early 2014, the Federal Transit Administration issued a key approval required for the project to move forward. Construction of the Purple Line is expected to begin in 2015, with the line beginning operation in 2020.



495 Express Lanes VIRGINIA

New express toll lanes on the Capital Beltway in Virginia completed their first full year of service in December 2013. The lanes are the first in the region to use dynamic pricing technology to manage congestion: as more people try to use the lanes, prices go up in order to ensure free-flowing travel conditions. The lanes provide a congestion-free alternative to adjacent, non-tolled lanes. Under the system, solo drivers pay the variable tolls while high-occupancy vehicles

(HOVs) with three or more travelers are allowed to use the lanes for free.

The 495 Express Lanes were built using a public-private partnership between the Virginia Department of Transportation and a private firm. VDOT has contracted with the same company to build express toll lanes in the median of a 29-mile stretch of I-95, north from Stafford County to just inside the Capital Beltway. The 95 Express Lanes are slated to be open in 2015.



H Street Streetcar DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Work continued in 2013 to make the District's first streetcar line a reality. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) laid the tracks for the 2.4-mile H Street/Benning Road NE line between 2008 and 2011. In 2013, the agency carried out testing of the track system and streetcar vehicles, and was working to complete the final track link from H Street to Union Station. DDOT expects the streetcar to begin regular service in 2014. The streetcar is the first in a 37-mile network of streetcar lines the District is planning to build in coming years.

To learn more about other major planned projects in the region, visit www.mwcog.org/clrp. For more information about projects not yet included in the CLRP, visit transportationplanninghub.org.

Maryland and Virginia Begin Allocating New Transportation Revenues to Projects Awaiting Funding



Early in 2013, the state legislatures in Maryland and Virginia each approved measures that would raise upwards of \$800 million a year in new revenue for transportation, the first statutory increases in two decades or more.

In July, just weeks after starting to collect the new revenue—at the gas pump, from fuel wholesalers, or through sales taxes, depending on the jurisdiction—both states started to allocate the new money to projects that had already been vetted and approved and were awaiting funding.

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) brought five major projects worth more than \$240 million to the TPB in July for inclusion in the region's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The three biggest-ticket items added to the TIP as amendments were new roadway interchanges—one at Indian Head Highway and Kerby Hill Road in southern Prince George's County, another at I-270 and Watkins Mill Road in Montgomery

County, and a third at US 15 and Monocacy Boulevard in Frederick County.

MDOT also added the second phase of a project to improve access to the Branch Avenue Metrorail station, including roadway improvements and a pedestrian bridge, and preliminary engineering work for construction of a full interchange on the Capital Beltway to provide better access to the Greenbelt Metrorail station.

All five projects were already in the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), which means that they had been included in federally required air quality analysis and that the agencies responsible for the projects had committed to funding and completing them within specified timeframes in the plan. With newly available revenue, the state became able to fund implementation of some of the nearer-term projects in the plan.

In September, MDOT also submitted amendments for two projects in Prince George's County—widening

of MD 4 from four lanes to six lanes with a new interchange at Suitland Parkway, and acquisition of necessary right-of-way to reconstruct a 3.3-mile stretch of US 1 in College Park to include sidewalks and wide curb lanes to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

Later in the fall, MDOT submitted amendments for several more roadway projects, including construction of a new two-lane bypass around the town of Brookeville, preliminary design work for a new interchange along US 29, and widening of Route 124.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) was busy in the fall of 2013 making final decisions about projects to submit for inclusion in the TIP, too.

Under Virginia's new revenue-raising measure, a significant portion of the new funds will be dedicated specifically to projects in Northern Virginia, with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), responsible for deciding which projects will receive funding first. This

decision-making process aims to ensure that new revenues are spent on projects that local planners, citizens, and elected officials see as the most important.

Among the projects approved by NVTA in 2013 were \$59 million for widening segments of Route 28, \$41 million for the new Innovation Center Metrorail station on the Silver Line, \$29 million for new VRE commuter rail station improvements and railcars, and \$12 million for multimodal street improvements along Columbia Pike.

Those improvements have yet to be included as amendments to the TIP. But VDOT has submitted amendments for \$104 million to fund a portion of the widening of VA 606 between Evergreen Mills Road and the Dulles Greenway, and \$17 million to get started on a project to upgrade the inside shoulder of the northbound Capital Beltway approaching the George Washington Memorial Parkway to assist in the merging of new express toll lanes with general purpose lanes. ■

New “Information Hub” Helps Residents Engage in Transportation Decision-Making



Dozens of elected or appointed bodies, boards, and agencies are responsible for making decisions about the future of the Washington region’s transportation system—from where to build bike lanes and bus stops, to whether or not to expand Metrorail or area highways. These decisions will impact how people get to and from work and around the region for decades to come.

For residents who are interested in better understanding how these decisions are made and who might want to get involved, a new TPB website, launched in October 2013, aims to explain in simple terms the complicated, multi-layered decision-making process.

Access and explore the Transportation Planning Information Hub for the National Capital Region by visiting transportationplanninghub.org.

The site—the Transportation Planning Information Hub for the National Capital Region, or “Information Hub” for short—describes how decisions are made at many different levels of government and how those processes relate to one another. It also highlights several high-profile transportation projects under consideration in the region and directs users to places where they can get involved in planning and decision-making processes going on in their local communities.

The site’s main focus—“Planning Process”—provides high-level descriptions of the different planning processes in place throughout the region, mainly at the municipal, county, and state levels. Local and state planners and officials are primarily responsible for determining how to allocate money so that the region’s roads, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle networks can meet current and future needs.

Another main section of the site—“High-Profile Projects”—highlights many of the regionally significant projects already in the CLRP, providing information on the location, projected cost, and expected completion date of the projects, and links to the jurisdiction or agency responsible for their implementation. The High-Profile Projects section also includes some projects that

are not in the CLRP, meaning they are currently unfunded, but are regionally significant and would have to be included in the regional plan before being built or implemented.

Finally, the Information Hub provides valuable information for residents who are interested in engaging in the many different local, state, and regional processes. The website brings together in one place contact information for all TPB-member governments and planning agencies, as well as a comprehensive library of the planning documents in which projects often appear before they enter the CLRP and move ahead to implementation. The library includes master and comprehensive plans, jurisdiction-wide transportation plans, and plans for specific travel modes, as well as six-year budgets and spending plans. In the discussion about planning processes, the website also flags opportunities at the state or local level where people can get involved.

The Information Hub represents a new effort by the TPB to reach out to the public to explain how and where transportation decisions are made in the region, and the role that the TPB plays in coordinating that process. It aims to make it easier for transportation professionals, advocates, and regular citizens alike to understand the process and become involved in it. ■

Regional “Green Streets” Policy Encourages Efforts to Limit Impacts of Stormwater Runoff



When heavy rain falls on the Washington region, the runoff from impermeable surfaces like roadways and sidewalks can carry trash, sediment, oil, bacteria, and other road-related pollutants into nearby waterways like the Potomac and Anacostia rivers, and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay.

In February 2014, the TPB approved a new regional “Green Streets” policy to encourage state and local jurisdictions across the region to take steps to reduce the volume of water that runs off into streams, or to slow the rate at which it does.

The regional Green Streets policy calls for the use of planted vegetation and other “green” treatments like permeable pavement materials and rain gardens along roadways to reduce or slow runoff. These treatments serve as natural filters to stop pollutants before they enter storm drains, which can be a more cost-effective alternative to traditional engineering approaches, such as channeling stormwater to centralized facilities for processing. Reducing runoff volumes and rates can also lessen the frequency and severity of flooding, especially

localized flash flooding during heavy rains.

Beyond these benefits, Green Streets treatments beautify streets, making them more welcoming places to walk or bicycle. The shade and natural cooling effects that street trees and other vegetation provide make streets more comfortable places to be during hot summer months, reduce air-conditioning costs for nearby buildings, and moderate the urban heat island effect.

The regional policy approved by the TPB specifically encourages local jurisdictions to adopt Green Streets policies, or to revise existing ones, to include key best practices that the TPB and its stakeholders have agreed are essential elements. Those best practices are outlined in the policy, as is a resource guide including policies, guidebooks, standards, and manuals from other agencies and organizations around the country.

In the Washington region, many jurisdictions already have Green Streets policies in place. For example, Prince George’s County adopted a Green Streets policy in 2012 requiring all county-financed road, sidewalk, trail, and transit projects to include environmental site design elements to reduce runoff from heavy rains. The county is currently in the process of converting excess sidewalk

The regional Green Streets policy calls for the use of planted vegetation and other “green” treatments like permeable pavement materials and rain gardens along roadways to reduce or slow runoff.

space along Ager Road into bioswales, which use tall grass, rocks, and soil to collect and filter rain water.

The TPB began developing the regional Green Streets policy in December 2012 in response to a request from the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership. In April 2013, the TPB convened a workshop of more than 90 staff from area transportation and environmental agencies or other interested individuals to discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Green Streets treatments.

Later in 2014, the TPB will hold another workshop to provide training on Green Streets best practices. The TPB will also conduct periodic surveys of area jurisdictions to assess the degree to which Green Streets policies have been adopted and implemented at the local and state levels. ■

TPB Selects 15 Local Projects to Receive Federal “Transportation Alternatives” Dollars

Fifteen local transportation projects in the Washington region received funding under a new, consolidated federal program aimed at supporting projects that expand travel choices like bicycling and walking, or that make other enhancements like mitigating the environmental impacts of transportation facilities.

The TPB selected the projects in 2013 to receive funding under the new program, known as Transportation Alternatives, after soliciting proposals from local governments, park authorities, school boards, and other eligible agencies.

The new program, created under the latest federal surface transportation authorization known as MAP-21, consolidates several programs that previously existed under earlier authorizations, including Recreational Trails, Transportation Enhancements, and Safe Routes to School.

Among the projects selected by the TPB, several will improve recreational trails in the region or expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

In the District of Columbia, the National Park Service is

using Transportation Alternatives funds to widen and repave the bicycle and pedestrian trail that connects the 14th Street Bridge with East Basin Drive in front of the Jefferson Memorial. The park service will also install safety rails and add new signage to help tourists and commuters find their way to key destinations.

The City of Takoma Park, in Maryland, received funding to widen sidewalks, add bike lanes, and install new pedestrian lighting along MD 410 near the intersection with New Hampshire Avenue. Fairfax County received funding to install bike stations and operating hardware to support the expansion of Capital Bikeshare to Reston, which the county hopes will give people more options for accessing Metrorail stations along the planned Silver Line.

The TPB also selected a number of projects in the District aimed at mitigating the environmental impacts of transportation facilities, especially by reducing runoff from impervious roadway and sidewalk surfaces during heavy rains. One is to replace traditional concrete pavement in a small number of alleys



with a new permeable pavement that allows water to seep into the soil instead of running off into nearby waterways. Another is to remove dead, dying, or hazardous trees from rights-of-way along roadway or use flexible sidewalk paving materials to give the roots of street trees more room to grow, thereby eliminating tripping hazards and improving the accessibility of sidewalks.

This is the first year that Metropolitan Planning Organizations like the TPB have been responsible for selecting such projects, as past federal transportation authorizations gave states exclusive responsibility for project selection under the programs that Transportation Alternatives consolidated.

MAP-21 still sends funds under the program directly to the states, but it now requires a portion of the money to be spent in metropolitan areas. In urbanized areas with populations of 200,000 or more, the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for that area is responsible for choosing which

projects receive that portion of the funding.

Transportation Alternatives complements the TPB's existing Transportation/Land-Use Connections Program (TLC), which helps local jurisdictions identify key improvements needed to help transportation and development patterns in the region support one another more effectively. One of the Transportation Alternatives projects selected in 2013 builds on a 2012 TLC study in Arlington County to evaluate sidewalks, curbs, and intersections along the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. With Transportation Alternatives funds, the county will be able to carry out the study's recommendations, making the corridor more accessible.

With its new responsibility for selecting projects to receive federal Transportation Alternatives funding, the TPB is helping to fund key local transportation improvements that support broader regional goals. ■

Federal Government Leading Continued Growth in Teleworking

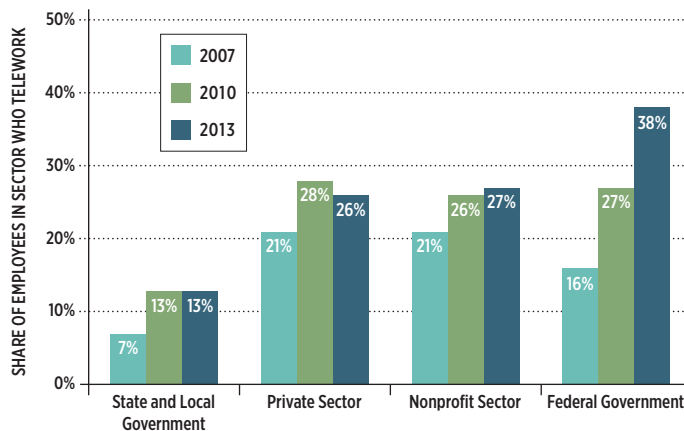
More of the Washington region's workforce is working from home or from remote work centers than ever before, according to the 2013 "State of the Commute" survey conducted by Commuter Connections, a program of the TPB.

The 2013 survey also found that the federal government is responsible for almost all of the growth in teleworking regionwide over the last three years and has, over the last six years, consistently posted more significant gains than the private, non-profit, and state and local government sectors.

According to the survey, which the TPB has conducted every three years since 2001, 27 percent of the region's workforce reported working from home or working remotely "at least occasionally." That's a slightly greater share than when the TPB last surveyed commuters in 2010, when 25 percent of respondents said they teleworked that often. Only 11 percent of commuters reported doing so in 2001.

The federal government saw the most significant gains in the share of workers who telework, according to the survey, far outpacing the private, non-profit, and state and local government sectors. In the 2013 survey, 38 percent of people who work for the federal government said they teleworked at least occasionally, up from 27

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEADING CONTINUED GROWTH IN TELEWORKING IN THE WASHINGTON REGION



Source: 2013 *State of the Commute* Survey, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board.

percent in 2010 and just 16 percent in 2007.

By comparison, only 26 percent of private sector workers reported teleworking—down from 28 percent in 2010—and 27 percent of workers in the non-profit sector did so, up slightly from 2010. Just 13 percent of state and local government workers said in the 2013 survey that they telework.

A major factor contributing to the increases in teleworking among federal workers was the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, a law requiring all federal agencies to develop formal telework policies, identify positions suitable for teleworking, and designate staff specifically to help implement and monitor telework programs.

The law also provided guidance on developing written employer-employee telework agreements and

providing training to workers and managers in teleworking best practices.

Driven in part by members of Congress representing districts in the Washington region, the legislation sought to reduce the need for additional office space for a growing federal workforce and to ensure that daily operations, especially critical ones, can continue even when extreme weather and natural disasters require the federal government to close or otherwise prevent workers from traveling to their offices.

Major snowstorms in the Washington region in late 2009 and early 2010, an earthquake in August 2011, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012 are all examples of the kinds of events that can disrupt daily operations, but the effects of which teleworking provisions can help mitigate.

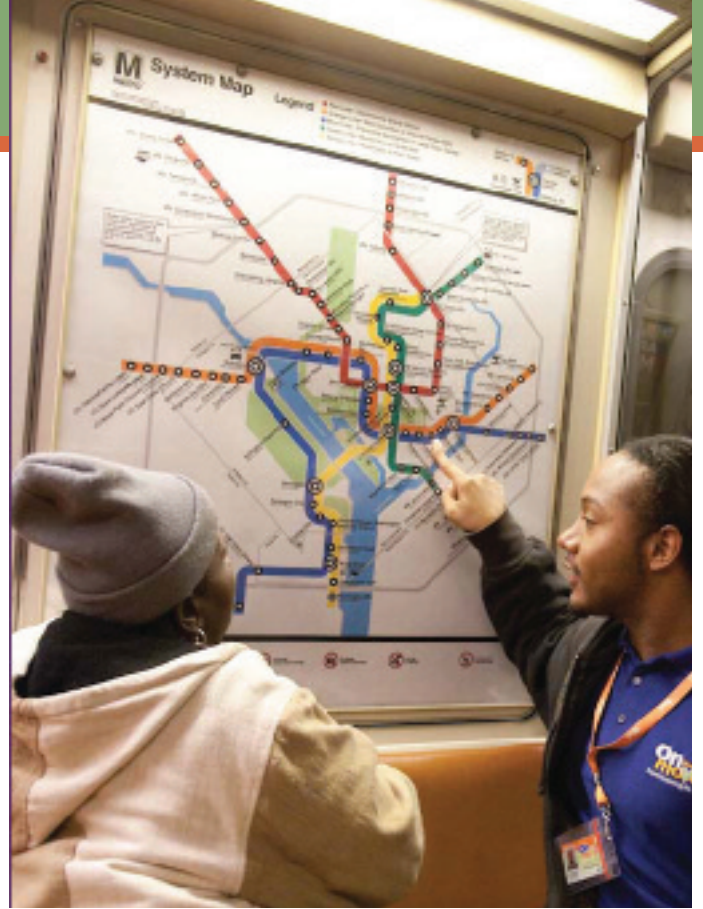
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Congress and the federal government's senior management, including President Obama, have also come to see teleworking as a valuable tool in attracting and retaining talented workers who are seeking ways to reduce the burden of daily commuting.

In addition to the federal government's striking gains in teleworking over the last several years, the TPB's most recent survey also found that

teleworkers in the region are doing so more often—1.4 days a week on average, up from 1.3 days a week three years ago. About 57 percent said they telework at least one day a week, up from 48 percent in 2010.

The survey also revealed room for further growth if more employers would allow it—18 percent of respondents said they “could and would” telework if given the opportunity. ■



Grants to Improve Travel Options for Low-Income Individuals and Persons With Disabilities

The TPB in June 2013 approved more than \$3 million in grants for a number of initiatives in the Washington region to assist low-income individuals and persons with disabilities in meeting their everyday mobility needs.

The 10 projects were approved to receive a total of \$2 million in funding from the Federal Transit Administration, pending approval from the agency later in the year, and about \$1 million in matching funds from the organizations or agencies slated to carry out the projects.

The federal portion of the funding comes under two FTA programs, both administered in the Washington region by the TPB. One is the Job Access and Reverse Commute program, known as JARC, which supports efforts to improve access to job sites and job-related activities for people with limited incomes. The other, New Freedom, supports initiatives to expand transportation options for people with disabilities and to provide services above and beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE



TRAVEL OPTIONS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Three of the latest projects approved by the TPB will provide low-interest car loans to working families in the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, purchase new wheelchair-accessible taxicabs in Prince William County, and support the ongoing operation of existing wheelchair-accessible taxicab service in the District.

Two other projects will provide women living in transitional housing for single mothers and their families with taxi vouchers to attend job training or reach job sites, and help offenders from correctional institutions in Fairfax County enter the workforce by providing transportation services to job sites that are not transit-accessible.

Since 2007, the TPB has awarded more than \$21 million in funding to 59 different JARC or New Freedom projects in the Washington region.

Many are continuing to provide valuable services, including: a website and call center known as "Reach-a-Ride" that offers individuals with specialized transportation needs a way to identify transportation options and find providers in their area; travel training programs to help individuals with disabilities learn how to use the region's public transit system; and wheelchair-accessible taxicab service in the District.

All of the projects have provided valuable direct services to users, and also serve as examples or models of successful initiatives that other jurisdictions or organizations in the region can replicate.

2013 was the last year that initiatives like these will receive funding under JARC and New Freedom, as both programs were eliminated or merged with other programs under the latest federal surface transportation reauthorization, MAP-21. However, federal dollars for such efforts will continue to flow to the region under the new law. Although MAP-21 eliminated the JARC program, it made the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority responsible for carrying out job access and reverse commute activities. The law also created a new program, Enhanced Mobility, to support efforts to improve mobility for older adults and people with disabilities.

About \$2.8 million a year will be available under the new Enhanced Mobility program, which combines New Freedom and another earlier program—Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities. The TPB is the designated recipient for the Enhanced Mobility funding, with responsibility for selecting projects and administering the funds. The TPB will conduct the first solicitation for funding under the program in 2014. ■

Region Using Federal TIGER Funding to Improve Reliability and Convenience of Bus Transit



Several transportation agencies in the Washington region are continuing to use grant funding awarded in 2009 under the federal TIGER program to make bus transit a more reliable and convenient travel option.

The 16 projects funded under the grant are located along key transportation corridors connecting residential, commercial, and employment centers. The projects all aim to improve the quality of bus service, some through improvements like dedicated bus lanes and priority traffic signals that allow buses to bypass auto traffic and move more quickly through intersections. Others

involve installing real-time arrival information displays and new and upgraded bus stops and stations.

The TPB applied for the grant funding in 2009, the first year of the US Department of Transportation's TIGER program, or Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery. The competitive grant program was one of many funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 aimed at stimulating the economy and creating jobs.

The TPB was awarded a total of \$58.8 million for the projects, which are being implemented by the Maryland and District departments of transportation, the City of

Alexandria, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC).

By the end of 2013, several of the projects had been partially or fully implemented. One, the purchase of 13 new clean-emissions commuter buses by PRTC, was completed in December 2012. The buses, which operate between Prince William County and job centers in Northern Virginia and the District, will soon have new GPS-based tracking systems to provide real-time arrival information for passengers.

Some of the other projects that are underway aim to improve reliability by taking buses out of regular traffic and running them in dedicated lanes for all or part of their routes.

The Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway, which the City of Alexandria is implementing and which is due to open in 2014, is part of a five-mile priority bus corridor along US 1. A 0.8-mile stretch of the Transitway will be a dedicated bus-only lane paid for by the TIGER grant. Construction of the dedicated lane was underway throughout 2013.

Dedicated bus-only lanes will come to the District by way of the TIGER grant—on Georgia Avenue NW near Howard University—as will “queue jump lanes” on 16th Street NW, which will allow buses to bypass automobile traffic at intersections.

The City of Alexandria will also install queue jump lanes along a designated corridor between the Van Dorn and Pentagon Metrorail stations.

The TIGER grant is also helping pay for a number of transit signal priority efforts, which aim to adjust the pattern of traffic lights to make sure that buses can pass through intersections with minimal delays. These efforts are underway in the downtown core of the District and along Leesburg Pike in Virginia.

Finally, more than \$20 million in funding under the TIGER grant is being spent on building a new bus station in Maryland and improving two in Virginia.

Maryland is using \$11.8 million in funding under the grant to pay for a portion of a major new bus transfer station at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard, near the border of Prince George’s and Montgomery counties. Construction began in the



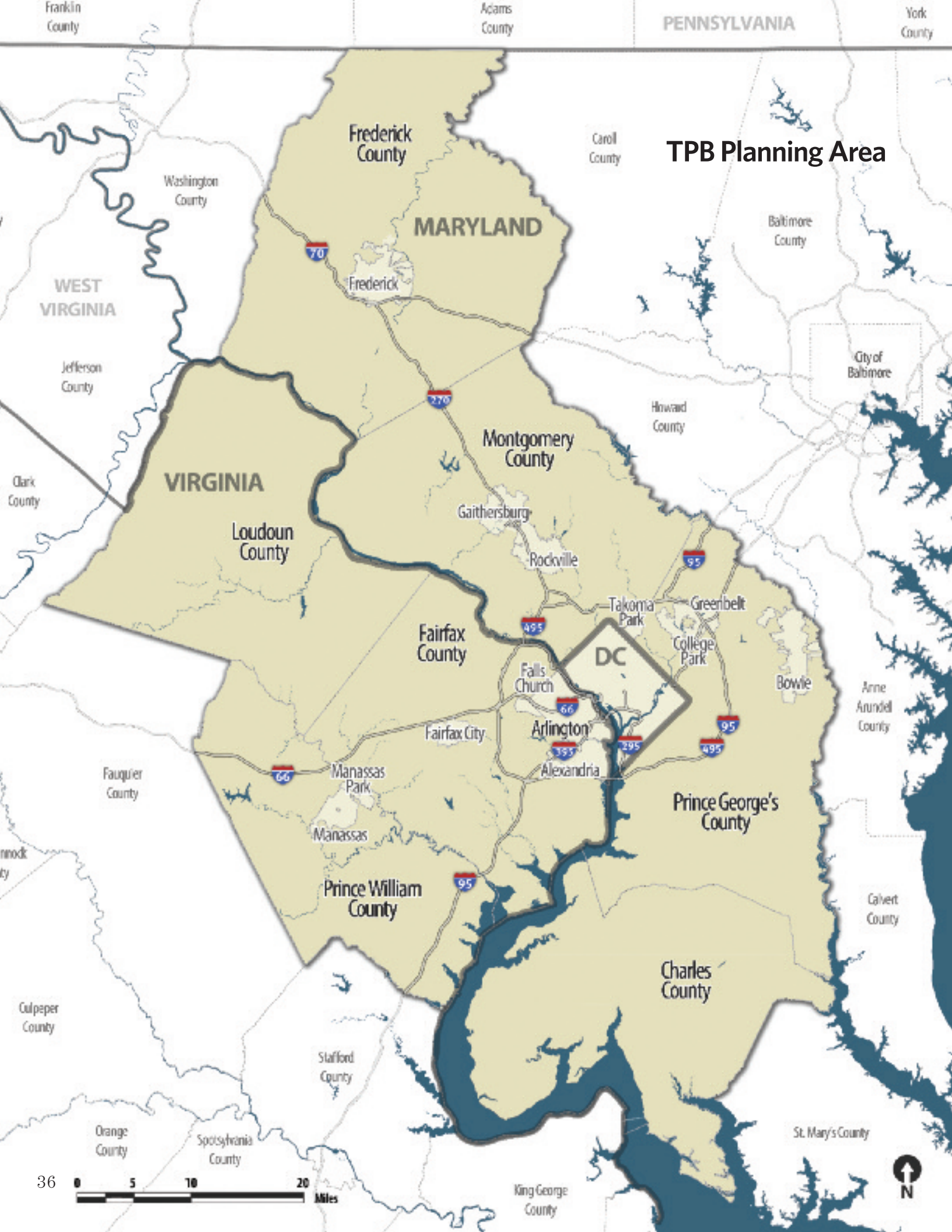
summer of 2013. The new station will consolidate several existing bus stops in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads area, where several busy bus corridors intersect, and provide shelter and install new crosswalks and signals to make pedestrian access to the station safer and easier. The station will also be a stop on the planned Purple Line.

In Virginia, WMATA will carry out improvements to major bus stations at the Franconia-Springfield and Pentagon Metrorail stations. The transit agency will use \$9.4 million from the TIGER grant to build new bus bays to increase bus capacity and decrease turn-around times, and to install real-time information displays to provide anticipated bus arrival times and important announcements for riders. The funding will also help reconfigure roadways and pedestrian facilities in the station areas to improve safety and access for travelers.



Federal TIGER grants are awarded through a nationwide competitive selection process. In 2009, USDOT received more than 1,400 applications for funding. It ultimately awarded \$1.5 billion to 51 projects.

As the applicant for the TIGER funds now being used to make bus transit in the Washington region more convenient and reliable, the TPB was able to bring together several of the region’s transportation agencies, not only for the TIGER grant, but also to continue thinking innovatively about how individual bus systems connect with and support one another and the region’s transit network. ■



TPB Planning Area

36 0 5 10 20 Miles



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