

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

April 19, 2006

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the March 15th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the March 15th TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the April 19th TPB agenda

Attachments

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

March 20, 2006

Honorable Sharon Ambrose
Council Member
Wilson Building
102
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20004

Dear Council Member Ambrose:

I am writing on behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to express our shared concerns regarding transit funding needs. The Board is deeply concerned that the region cannot accommodate all of the future demand for transit because of a lack of funding, putting more cars onto our overloaded roadways.

At the March 15, 2006 TPB meeting, the Board was briefed on the financial plan for the next major update of our long-range transportation plan. Currently, this plan constrains the projected transit ridership to and through the regional core after 2010, when the current Metro Matters funding agreement expires. In order to accommodate this projected ridership growth, the region will need funding to increase the capacity of the Metrorail, Metro bus and local bus systems.

Also at the March 15 meeting, the TPB received an update on the activities currently underway to identify funding for Metro as called for in Congressman Tom Davis's bill authorizing \$1.5 billion in federal capital funds. The Board was pleased to hear that legislative bodies in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia are all seeking ways to identify funding for Metro's critical capital needs, in addition to the states' other critical transportation needs. The Board is very appreciative of the time and effort you and your colleagues are spending on these transportation funding challenges.

The TPB believes that action is needed now to bring transit and all transportation revenues more in line with the critical investment needs in this region. If there is any additional information that the TPB could provide you as various transit funding proposals are discussed in your legislative session, please contact me at (240) 777-7989, or at councilmember.knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael Knapp
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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March 20, 2006

Honorable Kristen J Amundson
Delegate
Post Office Box 143
Mount Vernon VA 22121-0143

Dear Delegate Amundson:

I am writing on behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to express our shared concerns regarding transit funding needs. The Board is deeply concerned that the region cannot accommodate all of the future demand for transit because of a lack of funding, putting more cars onto our overloaded roadways.

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Sincerely,



Michael Knapp
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

March 20, 2006

Honorable Charles E Barkley
Delegate
Maryland General Assembly
222 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401-1991

Dear Delegate Barkley:

I am writing on behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to express our shared concerns regarding transit funding needs. The Board is deeply concerned that the region cannot accommodate all of the future demand for transit because of a lack of funding, putting more cars onto our overloaded roadways.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Knapp', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Knapp
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



JIM GRAHAM
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD ONE
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004



1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,
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Washington, D.C. 20004

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jim@grahamwone.com
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Chairperson
Committee on
Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

Voting Member
Board of Directors, Washington
Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

March 27, 2006

Mr. Michael Knapp, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Knapp,

Thank you so much for your letter regarding long range planning for the funding of mass transit in the Washington, DC metro area. As you know, I am a strong supporter of creating a local, dedicated funding source for Metro and have introduced legislation to do so in the Council.

I look forward to working with you more on this issue.

Sincerely,

JG/ah

Faint mirrored text bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.





COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

received
4/14/2006

KATHY PATTERSON
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 3

CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
LIBRARIES, AND RECREATION

OFFICE: (202) 724-8062
FAX: (202) 724-8118

April 12, 2006

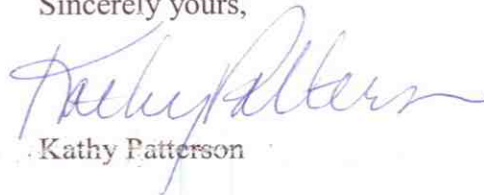
Michael Knapp, Chair
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE Suite 300
Washington DC 20002-4290

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Thank you for your letter of March 20, 2006 expressing your thoughts regarding transit funding.

I do share your concerns and support funding to address future transportation needs and challenges in our area. As you know, the DC Council has already approved a dedicated funding source, contingent on action by our partner jurisdictions.

Sincerely yours,



Kathy Patterson



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

April 13, 2006

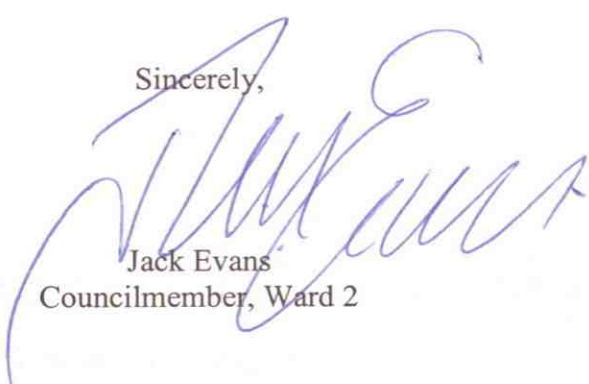
Mr. Michael Knapp
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Knapp,

Thank you for your letter of concern regarding the future of regional funding of transit needs. As you may already know, the Council recently passed Bill 16-569, the "Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Fund Act of 2006", which would dedicate one half of one percent of the existing sales tax in the District of Columbia for WMATA maintenance and improvements. This money would be in addition to the contribution the District already makes to WMATA.

The future of our mass transit options is of critical importance to our region, and I am hopeful my counterparts in Maryland and Virginia are able to reach a consensus on additional contributions soon. I appreciate your offer to provide additional information about various transit funding proposals, and welcome ideas on what the greater Washington metropolitan area can do to adequately address this important issue.

Sincerely,



Jack Evans
Councilmember, Ward 2

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Andrew J. Meese, AICP
Principal Transportation Planner

DATE: April 13, 2006

SUBJECT: Update on Implementation of the Regional Transportation Coordination Program

Introduction: This update addresses three main activities associated with implementation of the Regional Transportation Coordination Program provisionally known as “CapCom”: Contracting for a program manager through COG/TPB; status of a U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center study; and development of the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS). These efforts are coordinated through a regional Steering Committee comprising DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and WMATA representatives. The Steering Committee meets monthly (most recently on April 11, 2006), and has maintained active involvement in program development.

Program Manager: At its December 21, 2005 meeting, the TPB endorsed contracting for a program manager through COG/TPB. The program manager will work with Steering Committee member agencies to move the regional coordination program forward. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a “Program Implementation Manager and Technical Support Team” was issued by COG/TPB on March 10, 2006, and a number of proposals were received by the RFQ’s April 7 deadline. The Steering Committee is now reviewing proposals received, and anticipates selection of a contractor in early May. In association with this effort, the Steering Committee and staff are also finalizing administrative agreements for providing the supporting federal grant and matching funds to COG/TPB for this effort.

Volpe Center Study: The Volpe Center has substantially completed its study of regional program development. Volpe provided draft documents including a program management plan (with timelines and cost estimates), a mission needs statement, and a Steering Committee charter. The Volpe study addressed not only technological issues, but also operating procedures and information sharing issues for the regional program. Documentation of the Volpe study will be finalized once the program manager is selected and under contract.

Continued...

Transportation Planning Board

April 13, 2006

Page Two

Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS): Funded by a federal TEA-21 transportation grant and an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Homeland Security grant, the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology is developing RITIS on behalf of the region. The RITIS data system will be a major technical resource for the Regional Transportation Coordination Program. An early functional prototype of RITIS was demonstrated to TPB's Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Forces on March 14. The RITIS prototype is now able to share some transportation status information agency-to-agency through automated means. Development work is continuing.

Next TPB Briefing: The TPB will receive a full briefing on Regional Transportation Coordination Program implementation at its June 21, 2006 meeting.



Coalition for Smarter Growth

Choices for Our Communities, Choices for Our Region

February 16, 2006

Michael Knapp
Chair, Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Knapp

The TPB's report about the DC region's worst congestion bottlenecks tell us a great deal about the underlying causes of congestion, transportation project priorities, and the transportation reforms the public should demand as a pre-condition to paying higher taxes or tolls for transportation.

Major bottlenecks cited by the Council of Governments have a story to tell:

1) East-West Jobs Imbalance

Morning beltway congestion from Prince George's to the Wilson Bridge and top of the beltway congestion returning to Prince George's in the evening are both tied to the shortage of jobs in Prince George's county. Ron Kirby of your staff agrees with what we have long argued: "If you got more employment growth in the east, you could balance out that traffic." (Washington Post, Feb 16, A-12). Simply widening the Beltway would fail to address this root cause of congestion.

Addressing the jobs imbalance directly with investments and incentives by Maryland would improve the Prince George's County tax base, provide more funding for investment in schools, and take advantage of the 15 underutilized Metro stations in the county while allowing for more balanced beltway traffic flows. In contrast, the \$3 billion Intercounty Connector has been shown NOT to relieve Beltway traffic, would siphon more jobs to Montgomery County, and divert funds that could otherwise be used to correct the massive economic imbalance between Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

2) Not Enough Regional Focus on Congestion Priorities -- Outer Beltways Should not Be Regional Priorities

All of the top congestion locations, with the exception of I-95 in Woodbridge, are located on or within the Beltway. Our community pointed to this fact five years ago during the 2020 plan study. Yet, the Northern Virginia 2030 plan proposes to spread scarce resources across the region rather than focus on these key needs.

Furthermore, the ICC, the Western Bypass, and the so-called "techway" are routinely pushed by the business lobby as the top regional transportation priorities. These do nothing to help commuters stuck in the region's worst bottlenecks on the Beltway and inside the Beltway. Two years ago, the VDOT origin and destination study for the American Legion Bridge confirmed that the vast majority of commuters needed that route to travel between homes and jobs on, inside or near the Beltway, and were not "U-shaped

commuters.” The nearby targeted fix to the Dulles Toll Road exit ramp off the Beltway is a good example of setting the right, cost effective project priority.

3) Scattered Suburban Jobs Add to Reverse Commute Congestion

I-66 inbound evening congestion and I-395 inbound evening congestion add to the evidence of east-west jobs imbalance, but also show how the scattering of jobs at non-transit accessible locations in northern Virginia gives inner core workers no choice but to drive to work. Many of these workers are technology professionals who prefer to live in vibrant, walkable and transit-accessible neighborhoods in Arlington and DC. The lack of demand management and transit alternatives for reverse-commute I-66 and I-395 traffic, specifically reverse-commute HOV and express bus service, is another root cause of inbound evening congestion.

However, the response from VDOT is to propose to widen I-66 inside the Beltway. Nobody expects this to do anything more than move the bottlenecks to new locations such as the bridges into DC. I-66 widening fails to address the underlying job location problem in the suburbs and fails to recognize the benefit that connecting rail into Tysons Corner could provide. Furthermore, VDOT ignores the more cost-effective potential of bi-directional HOV and HOV-3, which would fix congestion immediately and cheaply. I-66 inside the Beltway could also be used as a test of HOT lanes before tying the region into a massive and costly regional HOT experiment on the Beltway and other interstates.

4) Express Toll Lanes Don't Address Underlying Problems and May Make them Worse

With too little debate and no consideration of the long public process that went into regional visioning in the mid-1990's, express toll lanes have become the solution de-jour for the highway-oriented departments of transportation. Yet, this capacity expansion fails to correct east-west jobs imbalances around the Beltway. Express toll lanes on radial highways could fuel yet more distant development far from jobs. Such an approach would further undermine the potential for investment at already built and paid for Metro stations on the east side of the region.

Express toll lanes do not help to focus mixed-use development in walkable centers as do transit investments. Public funds spent on taxes or tolls would be better directed to provide the choice in transportation offered by transit tied to focused, walkable and mixed-use transit oriented development. At a minimum, the regional express toll lane approach must be further analyzed in terms of its land use effects, compared to alternative regional transit and land use approaches, and should consider conversion of existing lanes as a quicker alternative with less impact on neighborhoods.

Recommendation:

We urge the TPB to address these issues in its planning activities and to adopt land use and transportation priorities to correct the east-west divide and the disconnect between jobs and transit. We will be providing more specific recommendations in the coming days.

Sincerely,



Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director

received
4/14/2006

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202)962-1034



April 11, 2006

Gladys Mack, Chairman, Board of Directors
Dan Tangherlini, Interim General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Subject: Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements for Phase I of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project

Dear Mrs. Mack, Members of the Board and Mr. Tangherlini:

At the March 28th public hearing on the proposed Dulles Corridor Metrorail ("Dulles Rail") Project held at the Kilmer Middle School in Vienna, several design refinements were announced.

They include:

- Elimination of redundant elevators at the entries to the stations;
- Reduction of the width of pedestrian bridges leading to the mezzanine levels in the stations; and
- Reduction of the width of sidewalks along Route 7 and Route 123 leading to the stations.

The designers of Dulles Rail are expected to further recommend the complete elimination of pedestrian bridges at three of the four stations in Tyson's Corner, as reported by the Washington Post on March 23, 2006.

Given the tight deadlines facing Dulles Rail, the Metro Riders' Advisory Council believes it is necessary to convey to you our thoughts on this project at this time.

The Metro Riders' Advisory Council strongly objects to these planned changes. We ask the WMATA Board and General Manager to support the restoration of these critical design elements and to seek sufficient funding necessary to provide for them.

Redundant Elevators

We join with Metro's Elderly and Disabled (E&D) Committee, which has advocated for the installation of redundant elevators at every point in a station where a rider is required to either ascend or descend to reach the mezzanine level before descending to the platform. Redundant escalators should be installed at both the entry locations and between the mezzanine and the platform. E&D outlined this need in its March 6, 2006 letter to you. Although the Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements for Phase I still

include redundant elevators between the mezzanine level and the station platforms, such redundancy is necessary at all entry points.

The benefits of redundant elevators for persons with disabilities are obvious in that they eliminate the substantial inconveniences caused when one elevator breaks down or is taken out of service for maintenance. The inconveniences caused when an elevator is out of service were dramatized for local elected officials when many participated in the Washington Area Council of Governments' Transportation Planning Board's Disability Awareness Day on October 20, 2004. One disabled rider arrived at the press conference scheduled for the event more than one hour late due to an elevator outage at a major transfer station.

Redundant elevators also provide a necessary backup during times of heavy ridership. This is especially important in an urban area like Tyson's Corner that will have extremely heavy pedestrian traffic during morning and evening rush hours once the rail line is in operation. It is estimated that approximately 63% of the riders in Tyson's Corner will arrive at the stations by foot. Metro's current design standards call for full redundancy of elevators in all new stations. The WMATA Manual of Design Criteria, revised in March 2006, requires that two Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible elevators be installed between "changes in elevation." We ask that Metro honor these standards by insisting that they be followed on the Dulles extension.

Reduction in Width of the Pedestrian Bridges

The Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements for Phase I call for a huge reduction in the width of pedestrian bridges from 23 feet to 12 feet. We believe that based on the number of riders who would crowd these bridges during rush hour and the inconvenience that wheel chair and stroller users would experience, the reduction in width is imprudent. Since we understand that there is only one bridge in the system that is 23 feet wide, and that a slightly smaller width would be sufficient in most situations, we urge that Metro support restoring the width of these bridges to at least 18 feet, excluding the handrails along the sides.

Elimination of Pedestrian Bridges

Proposed budget reductions still under consideration would go further and eliminate pedestrian bridges at the Tyson's East, Tyson's Central 123, and Tyson's West stations, forcing Metro riders to cross major, high-volume, arterial highways (Route 123 and Route 7.) We believe this proposal would threaten public safety and seriously undermine ridership at these stations. Route 123 and Route 7 through Tyson's Corner are among the most hostile pedestrian environments in Fairfax County. Crossing these highways would be a major disincentive for potential Metro users. Their elimination is unthinkable. We urge the Metro board and management to vigorously oppose this move.

Width of Sidewalks Leading to the Stations

While the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan calls for sidewalks in Tyson's Corner to be at least eight feet in width, the plan recently presented would provide for sidewalks only six feet in width. Six feet in an area with heavy pedestrian traffic is insufficient for clear passage by people on foot, wheelchair users and persons with strollers. We urge the Metro board and management to insist on the installation of sidewalks 10 feet in width to better accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and persons on foot.

We thank you for considering our views on this matter and welcome the opportunity for a focused discussion on them.

Sincerely,



Dennis Jaffe

Chairman

Metro Riders' Advisory Council

cc: Board of Directors, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
 Riders' Advisory Council, WMATA
 Patrick Sheehan, Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to WMATA
 The Honorable Tim Kaine, Commonwealth of Virginia
 The Honorable Anthony Williams, District of Columbia
 The Honorable Robert Ehrlich, State of Maryland
 The Honorable John Warner, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable George Allen, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable Thomas Davis, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable James Moran, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Frank Wolf, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Ludwig Gaines, City of Alexandria
 The Honorable Robert Lederer, City of Fairfax
 The Honorable Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
 The Honorable Gerry Connolly, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
 The Honorable Patsy Ticer, 30th District, Senate of Virginia
 The Honorable Vincent Callahan, 34th District, Virginia House of Delegates
 The Honorable Kenneth Plum, 36th District, Virginia House of Delegates
 Pierce Homer, Virginia Secretary of Transportation
 Mame Reiley, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
 James E. Bennett, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
 Joseph Bowman, Virginia State Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
 Julie Christopher, Virginia Department for the Aging
 P. Takis Salpeas, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 James Hughes, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Steve Feil, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Edward Thomas, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Dave Lacosse, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Nat Bottigheimer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Glen Millis, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Corey W. Hill, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
 Charles S. Carnaggio, P.E., Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
 Michael Knapp, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board
 The Honorable Kathryn Porter, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board
 Emmet Tydings, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board
 Ron Kirby, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board
 Wendy Klancher, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board
 John Swanson, National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board

cc: Kathleen Walsh, Disability Rights Center
Thomas Choman, Fairfax Area Disability Services Board
George Barker, Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Committee
Michael Cooper, Endependence Center of Northern Virginia
Sandra Hermann, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Heidi Lawyer, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Maureen S. Hollowell, Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy
Becky Currin, Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy
Robin Hoerber, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
John Phelps, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
Burt Boyd, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Jim Granger, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Walt Phillips, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Virginia Industries for the Blind
Vijaya Tabir, Orientation and Mobility Instructor
James Schoonover, Orientation and Mobility Instructor
Melanie Hughes, Orientation and Mobility Instructor
Jack Corbett, MetroRiders.org
Chris Carney, Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic Office
Cheryl Cort, Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities

Comments Received Online

Submitted by: An Individual

Larry Martin

Washington, DC 20004

2/13/2006

Public Outreach and education on RMAS

Comments to the TPB concerning Item #11 on the 2/15/06 Agenda In the year ahead opportunities exist to shape new public input improvements (see final 2 bullets under item #11 brief). The points below are offered to inform the decisions yet to be made in shaping the process. Kudos to the TPB staff and the 05 CAC for advancing efforts to improve outreach to the public in metro-area transportation planning, and particularly the RMAS. In my experience, the time to inform and educate citizens who are involved in civic issues is before contentious matters arise, and therefore stimulating an understanding of and discussions of transportation issues generally, even if not focused directly on RMAS or CLRP, serves TPB purposes by educating and preparing the public to process more complicated and often contentious issues when they do arise. In addition to the RMAS and CLRP, the public needs a general framework for thinking about how transportation effects their QoL, mobility, health and environment. Numerous frameworks already exist. The TPB should evaluate the value of outreach beyond "leaders" to all organizations that engage citizens on the neighborhood/community level. The TPB/CAC sponsored forums on "What if the Region Grew Differently?" have been successful. The information and lessons learned need to be packaged for wider distribution beyond what TPB staff or the CAC can be directly responsible for. The TPB should partner with member and allied organizations to promote wider distribution of information through meetings, discussions and workshops sponsored by other organizations. Outreach goals for 06 should be 10 to 100 X those realized in the past year.

Charles Connors

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

2/21/2006

Chronic Traffic Congestion Study

Ronald Kirby, I read with interest your comments in the recent Washington Post article; "Region's Traffic: From Bad To Worse". I agree that the new regional study of area traffic calls for immediate action. The study should serve as a major wake up call. I also agree that serious discussion and planning must become a priority for our region, but I must take issue with your comments regarding private "express toll lanes". You were quoted as saying: "The best short-term solution for Washington area commuters lies in express toll lanes", which are planned on almost all major commuter routes...because tolls could be adjusted according to traffic levels, allowing them to control congestion. Express toll lanes "are the single biggest opportunity on the horizon to make major improvements within the next five to 10 years". There is a major flaw in this statement. Private express toll lanes do not lessen congestion! While they do allow some to buy their way out, they do nothing to reduce overall traffic congestion, a fact even toll lane supporters admit. If the study has shown us anything, it has shown us that we must explore, plan and fund solutions to decrease the congestion immediately. We can't afford 5 to 10 years on an experiment designed to cater to the few at the expense of the many. This problem effects all of us and we have to choose the most effective solutions. Solutions that address the problem as a whole. The study showed us that the problem is getting worse fast. We must choose wisely! Express toll lanes DO NOT reduce traffic congestion. They make no sense as a solution. Charles Connors Chevy Chase, Maryland
