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Falls Church

Loudoun County

Manassas

Prince William County

MEMORANDUM

April 10, 2003

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the March 19 TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the March 19 TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the April 16 TPB agenda.

Attachments



April 4, 2003

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Mr. Phillip E. Meany, Jr.
Chairman
Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
P.O. Box 6149
McLean, Va 22106-6149

Dear Mr. Meany:

This letter is in response to your letter dated March 12, 2003 to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). Also, it provides comments on Robert Chase's discussion during the public comment period at the March 19 TPB meeting, and to Mr. Chase's opinion/editorial contribution in the March 23, 2003 *Washington Post*.

Your March 12 letter centered on the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance (NVTAA) request to the TPB to immediately undertake or recommend an assessment of the Washington region's security-related transportation deficiencies and missing links. Mr. Chase's spoken and written comments elaborated upon that to state that since September 11, 2001 there had been "...no effort at any level of government to address security-related regional transportation deficiencies." I want to respond to Mr. Chase's assertion by describing the emergency transportation planning activities completed or underway at the TPB, in coordination with the new National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (NCREPC) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

COG released its Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) on September 11, 2002. Within the RECP, available at www.mwcog.org on the Internet, the Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex describes a number of strategies that the public agencies of the metropolitan area can utilize to manage surge or emergency transportation demands. Following the September 2002 completion of the RECP, the COG/TPB Emergency Transportation Work Group has convened regularly, undertaking drills, exercises, and discussions of actual emergencies. The Work Group also has provided considerable input to the development of the Regional Incident Communications and Coordination System (RICCS).

Mr. Phillip E. Meany, Jr.

April 4, 2003

Page 2

During development of the RECP, the TPB and its advisory committees examined the question of transportation needs for emergency preparedness. A list of needs was compiled and transmitted to our region's Congressional delegation in April 2002. (A copy of that list and the accompanying transmittal letter are enclosed with this letter.) Additionally, we met with staff of the region's Congressional delegation to brief them on the listed needs. The list identified high-priority items that could be achieved in a quick time frame, which is mandated by our circumstances to improve our preparedness. Requests included improvements to and integration of personnel communications equipment; traffic control devices for emergencies and evacuations; expanded deployment of the Capital Wireless Integrated Network (CapWIN); regional traveler information systems improvements; additional cameras or monitoring equipment to protect travelers and transportation infrastructure; and a backup operations communications center for WMATA and the local transit systems. Such equipment and systems could have an immediate impact on improving the region's readiness for emergencies.

I share your sense of urgency in addressing the issue of emergency transportation planning. In that vein, it was imperative in the development of the RECP that we focus on improved management of the existing transportation system, and the need to undertake demand management on the transportation system in emergencies. Today's terrorism threats are less likely to be the Cold War-era, metropolitan-wide threats, and more likely to be limited in geographic effect. In such instances, it will be imperative to prioritize the use of transportation facilities for those who absolutely need it at that moment—people in immediate harm's way, say, within a mile of the incident, or incident responders. If other members of the public are safe where they are, then they should stay there, thereby helping to ensure that the maximum transportation capacity is available to those who need it. Never would we suggest (as implied in Mr. Chase's public testimony tying lack of highway capacity increases to the tragic victims in the World Trade Center attack) that members of the public should remain or be kept in an unsafe place. Indeed, depending upon the emergency, members of the public might put themselves at greater risk by evacuating than by sheltering in the safe place where they are, and would be well advised to listen to federal, state, and local authorities on radio and television for instructions during the emergency.

COG, TPB, and the NCREPC are currently undertaking a second phase of emergency transportation, evacuation, and sheltering-in-place planning. This phase is focused on more detailed planning than was possible within the budget and time constraints of the September 2002 RECP. The goal is to have this enhanced version of the plan released by September 2003. This version will:

Mr. Phillip E. Meany, Jr.

April 4, 2003

Page 3

- Apply traffic and transit engineering analytical techniques, similar to those used in hurricane and nuclear power plant evacuation planning, to develop a regional evacuation traffic management and mitigation coordination plan for addressing flow interruptions, including consideration of stalled vehicle clearance, critical intersections management, merge points, staged tow trucks, police traffic redirection, and needed increases in transportation system capacity.
- Develop enhanced information on the “non-transportation” aspects of emergency transportation, evacuation, and crisis relocation, such as sheltering, population alert and mass-media outreach. This will include developing public awareness messages for evacuation, sheltering-in-place, and self-protection, as well as a regional population alert and warning system.

While our work to date has necessarily focused on improved management of the demand for and operational capabilities of the existing transportation system, our continuing work will provide an opportunity for a more comprehensive assessment of strategies for emergency evacuation, including needed increases in transportation system capacity. I invite Mr. Chase and other NVTAs representatives to continue to participate actively in reviewing the products of this work activity, and where possible to provide specific suggestions for improving our emergency evacuation plans and capabilities.

Thank you for your comments, and for the opportunity to address a topic of great concern to us all.

Sincerely,

Peter Shapiro
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Enclosure



March 27, 2002

*District of Columbia
Bowie
College Park
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Loudoun County
Manassas
Prince William County*

Honorable George F. Allen
Honorable Roscoe Barlett
Honorable Tom Davis
Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Honorable James P. Moran

Honorable Constance Morella
Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Honorable Paul Sarbanes
Honorable John Warner
Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Honorable Albert Wynn

Dear Senator/Congressman:

As part of its emergency response activities, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has identified a priority list of unfounded needs for ensuring regional transportation emergency preparedness. Attached is the list of unfounded regional emergency transportation needs approved by the TPB at its March 20, 2002 meeting.

Several policy-level and technical-level committees of state and local transportation officials were involved in developing this list, which prerepresents a consensus of the participating jurisdictions and agencies as to the top emergency transportation needs for the region – needs which are critical to the federal government.

The communities of the Metropolitan Washington region remain on the front lines of homeland security concerns, and have made effective use of federal funds provided in FY 2002 for improving homeland security and emergency response capabilities. The transportation systems of the Metropolitan Washington region are critical for providing access to responders to emergencies, for moving members of the public from harm's way, and for ensuring the continued functioning of the region's economy.

We request your consideration of these needs for inclusion in the FY2003 federal appropriations. If you or your staff have any questions about these needs, please feel free to contact Mr. Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, at (202) 962-3310.

Sincerely,

Bruce Williams
Chair, Board of Directors
Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Phil Mendelson
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Attachment

March 20, 2002

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002**

Unfunded Regional Transportation Emergency Response and Coordination Needs

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board has approved the following list of unfunded needs and forwarded it to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The list provides brief project descriptions and cost estimates for a number of top priority regional-level coordination and communications improvements. The cost estimates are one-time, single fiscal year needs.

The unfunded priority regional enhancements are:

- **IMPROVEMENTS TO AND INTEGRATION OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

- *Currently Underway:* Following the events of September 11, the federal government provided significant emergency response funding to the jurisdictions in the Washington region. These vital packages included funding for top priority communications equipment for *public safety* personnel and agencies.
- *Unfunded Needs:* A next priority will be providing improved communications means for *transportation* agencies and personnel. Such systems will allow better interagency and interjurisdictional management and coordination of the region's transportation systems when a regional emergency is taking place. Included will be purchases and improvements such as additional or enhanced cellular telephones, radios, satellite telephones, landline telephone hardwiring and priority access systems, teleconferencing and videoconferencing equipment, and other communications systems and equipment. Cost estimate: \$5 million.

- **INTERAGENCY FIBER OPTIC CONNECTIONS**

- *Currently Underway:* FY2002 federal emergency grants included \$2.2 million to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for improvements to its fiber optic communications network. Such networks provide an excellent fail-safe means of communication in emergencies. A number of existing fiber installations could become components of an eventual regional fiber optic backbone, providing a fail-safe interagency communications system among transportation operators.

- ***Unfunded Needs:*** Additional funds in FY2003 for WMATA and other transportation agencies in the region will enable installation of new links to the public agency fiber optic lines in the region to cover critical gaps between agencies not now linked, and provide additional capabilities such as video sharing and telecommunications not dependent upon the public telephone system (which may be damaged or overburdened in crises). Cost estimate: \$10 million.

- **TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES FOR EMERGENCIES AND EVACUATIONS**
 - ***Currently Underway:*** FY2002 federal emergency funds included \$20 million for upgraded traffic signal controllers, traffic video monitoring, and a traffic information dissemination system for the District of Columbia. These systems will help manage traffic in case of an emergency requiring evacuation of the District of Columbia.
 - ***Unfunded Needs:*** For transportation management throughout the region in emergencies installation of devices and fail-safe backup control systems will enable safe traffic control in extreme situations, including variable message signs, lane control signals, gates on entrance and exit ramps, and other equipment. Cost estimate: \$25 million.

- **EXPANDED DEPLOYMENT OF THE CAPITAL WIRELESS INTEGRATED NETWORK (CAPWIN)**
 - ***Currently Underway:*** Deployment of CapWIN is critical for tying together computers and communications equipment in a variety of the field vehicles of public safety and transportation agencies, for better field communications, data sharing, and video sharing capabilities in incidents. This long-term, ongoing project received a vital enhancement with \$20 million in federal FY2002 emergency funding.
 - ***Unfunded Needs:*** Equipping additional agencies and vehicles with CapWIN will help expand the benefits of the system. Cost estimate: \$10 million.

- **REGIONAL TRAVELER INFORMATION SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS**
 - ***Currently Underway:*** The existing Partners In Motion system (funded by \$8 million FY1997 and FY1998 federal transportation grants) provides a baseline of regional traveler/public information, but was not designed for a role for major crisis situations.
 - ***Unfunded Needs:*** Additional funding is needed to undertake enhanced data collection, fusion, and dissemination critical to providing timely and accurate information to the public in case of emergencies. Needs include trained expert staff,

engineering, communications equipment, computer hardware/software, real-time transit stop information signs and other similar signs in public areas, and connections to the private sector and media. Cost estimate: \$10 million.

- **ADDITIONAL CAMERAS OR MONITORING EQUIPMENT TO PROTECT TRAVELERS AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

- *Currently Underway:* Currently, only a fraction of the region's transportation infrastructure is under monitoring.
- *Unfunded Needs:* Additional equipment would expand the coverage of safety and security monitoring on roadways, buses, and rail transit. Cost estimate: \$20 million.

- **BACKUP OPERATIONS COMMUNICATIONS CENTER FOR WMATA AND LOCAL TRANSIT SYSTEMS**

- *Currently Underway:* WMATA's buses and trains will have a critical role in the region in case of evacuation.
- *Unfunded Needs:* Making the command and control of transit systems fail-safe is of paramount importance, including building redundant operations and business systems for WMATA bus and rail operations. WMATA's centers will also play a key role for information sharing among the region's other transit systems and traffic operations centers. Cost estimate: \$50 million.

Total of the above cost estimates: \$130 million.

Debbie Leigh

From: Christine Snovell [csnovell@mindspring.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2003 11:33 AM
To: cogdtp@mwcog.org
Subject: Western Transportation Corridor/Western Bypass Parkway

Dear Honorable Peter Shapiro,

I am writing to express my OPPOSITION to creating a Western Bypass Parkway connecting I-95 in Virginia to I-270 and I-70 in Maryland. I live in the Potomac Station subdivision off Route 7 in Leesburg (off River Creek Parkway, right by the power lines), and my house is directly in the path of this proposed corridor. My neighbors and I fought vehemently with Loudoun county to get this option taken out of its transportation plan, and we were successful. However, I recently received a newsletter from the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance promoting this and other proposed corridors to alleviate the traffic in the DC area. I'm not sure why I'm getting it at this time, but I am concerned this means there has been renewed interest by the state in pursuing these new roads. I was told about a year ago we all have to wait until the feasibility study is complete before the state makes recommendations, and that study wouldn't be complete for about another 2 years. So, I just wanted to put my two cents in now in case there has been movement on this issue.

I not only DON'T believe new big roads are the solution to our traffic problems (rail and more mass transit being one of the better solutions), but I am told I would either lose my house to "eminent domain" and/or the bypass would come so close to my house my property value would be near zero to a potential homeowner.

Thank you for considering my views. If you would kindly let me know you have received and reviewed my comments, I would be grateful.

Christine Snovell
43101 Binkley Circle
Leesburg, VA 20176
email: csnovell@mindspring.com

John Swanson

From: John Swanson
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2003 11:02 AM
To: 'csnovell@mindspring.com'
Subject: Western Corridor Study

Ms. Snovell:

Your e-mail message to Chairman Shapiro has been distributed to all members of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB).

Please be advised that the "Western Corridor Study" is included in the TPB's current Constrained Long-Range Plan only as a study. This status is consistent with your understanding of the project, as conveyed in your message.

Thank you for contacting the TPB.

John Swanson

John Swanson
Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
202/962-3295



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Loudoun County

Manassas

Prince William County

MEMORANDUM

March 19, 2003

To: Transportation Planning Board

From: Andrew Austin,
Transportation Planner III

Subject: New Features of COG's Redesigned Website

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments launched its newly redesigned Web site on March 3, 2003. The new site, www.mwcog.org, will allow easier access to information about COG and TPB programs and provide more resources to the site's users. TPB Members might be interested in the following enhancements:

- *More Information About the TPB and Planning Activities.* New sections better describe the history and function of the TPB and the many planning activities that it oversees. A regional map provides links to member jurisdictions' Web sites.
- *Increased Access for Public Involvement.* The site outlines the TPB's Public Involvement Process and provides better information about the Citizen Advisory Committee, Access For All Advisory Committee, and other public meetings. A new online form prominently solicits public comment that will be included monthly in the TPB's "Letters Received".
- *Interactive Event and Meeting Calendar.* An extensive calendar feature displays upcoming meetings and events. Agendas, minutes and other meeting documents can be downloaded from the Web.
- *Committee Home and Password Protected Pages.* The TPB, along with each committee and subcommittee is able to have its own "extra-net." In addition to functioning as the committee's Web page there are optional password protected areas for meeting calendars, documents, and membership lists. Committees can password protect sections of their extranet to allow for private circulation of documents or member lists.

If you have any questions or comments on the new Web site's content, please contact Andrew Austin at (202) 962-3353 or at aaustin@mwcog.org.