

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Scenario Study Task Force

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

SUBJECT: Planned Scenario Study Activities for the Remainder of FY08 and Possibilities
for FY09 Activities

DATE: December 13, 2007

This memorandum outlines the activities related to the Scenario Study that are planned to be completed by June 30, 2008 under the Scenario Study program element in the FY08 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It also suggests Scenario Study activities for inclusion in the FY09 UPWP, which will be developed in early 2008. This task force will be asked to provide input for the development of the FY09 UPWP in early 2008.

Planned Scenario Study Activities for the Remainder of FY08

As noted in the memo to the TPB dated September 19, 2007 that proposed the formation of this task force, there are several Scenario Study activities that are currently underway and scheduled to be completed by December 2007. These include a report on the development and analysis of several variably priced lane scenarios, analysis of the projected costs of the existing scenarios, and information about the localized impacts that could be expected under those scenarios. The task force is to be briefed on these activities as part of today's agenda.

In addition to those activities, the FY08 UPWP, which covers the period through June 30, 2008, calls for several additional study tasks that TPB staff plans to complete by June 30, with regular progress reports to the task force over this period:

- *Develop methods to better visualize and communicate the features and impacts of the existing scenarios and the variably priced lane scenarios.*

TPB staff is currently exploring several techniques that could be used to make the Scenario Study a more useful tool for communicating information to the public and informing decision making by elected officials and planning professionals. Specifically, staff hopes to complete in early 2008 the integration of information about the land use

and transportation scenarios into the GoogleEarth framework that is currently available for viewing CLRP projects and Cooperative Land Use Forecast information on the Web in a real-world interface. Other opportunities for localized visualization of scenarios will be pursued during this time period.

- *Develop two to three new scenarios that draw upon the individual strategies (e.g. “households in” and “jobs out”) reflected in the existing scenarios, including the variably-priced lane scenarios.*

Several participants at Scenario Study outreach meetings have commented that it would be useful to see scenarios that combine the various strategies used in developing the original scenarios, in the expectation that these may show more significant impacts on travel indicators such as VMT and congestion. These new scenarios could also include aspects of one or more of the variably priced lane scenarios, and/or additional elements identified for study. Staff will look to the task force for guidance on the process for developing these new scenarios. Input could be sought from existing resources such as the Joint Technical Working Group for the Scenario Study and the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee, and perhaps also from graduates of the TPB Community Leadership Institute who are already familiar with the existing scenarios and some of the public comment received on them.

Proposed Scenario Study Activities for FY09

Staff has prepared the following proposed timeline for Scenario Study activities in FY09.

July - December 2008

- *Analyze new scenarios developed in the last half of FY08 using transportation-related indicators as well as additional quality-of-life indicators.*

Staff would analyze the impacts of the new scenarios developed in FY08. Analysis would include the same measures of effectiveness previously used – travel indicators like transit use, average daily VMT, and congestion measures – and would be conducted against an updated baseline that reflects changes to the travel demand model, the Cooperative Forecasts, and the CLRP since the previous scenario analysis was completed. These new scenarios could also be evaluated using additional measures of effectiveness, such as environmental factors like surface permeability and preservation of sensitive areas, or other quality of life indicators. This would respond to a comment heard at Scenario Study outreach events – that the potential impacts on transportation indicators alone are not compelling enough to justify a concerted regional effort to implement an alternative land use and transportation scenario for 2030 and beyond.

- *“Drill-down” to the community and project level within the scenario alternatives.*

“Drilling down” to the community and project level within scenario alternatives could help identify locations in which land use shifts are particularly crucial to achieving scenario results, and where resources to improve transportation infrastructure may need to be focused.

- *Explore opportunities for incorporation of scenario results into the regional planning process, possibly including:*
 - *Prioritization of transportation projects at the regional level*

In other metropolitan areas around the country, scenario planning exercises such as the TPB Scenario Study have been used as tools for prioritization of transportation projects and expenditure at the regional level. This can occur through identification of priority funding areas, a list of “regionally significant” projects for which to advocate at the regional level, or even the development of a regional “unconstrained plan” that reflects consensus on a single desired land use and transportation scenario. A key question is how to tie such regional-level prioritization to the process of developing the CLRP. Some metropolitan areas have instituted systems for evaluation of projects based on regional standards or scoring systems that reflect multiple regional goals, including environmental measures.

- *Regional commitment to a common set of land use and transportation planning principles*

Another approach taken by some metropolitan areas, and an approach that has been used in this region with some success, is to develop a common set of principles that each member jurisdiction in the region would pledge to adhere to in its land use and transportation policy. The Partnership for Regional Excellence report completed and approved by the COG Board of Directors in 1993 is an example of such an agreement, and the COG Greater Washington 2050 Work Group is exploring possibilities for updating and expanding upon that effort. The Scenario Study and the public input received about the study’s findings could serve as a technical foundation for a more ambitious and potentially more specific set of planning principles that would in turn influence the CLRP. There may be opportunities for this task force to support the COG Greater Washington 2050 initiative leadership in pursuing such an approach.

January - June 2009

- *Conduct a new round of public outreach designed to inform possible implementation of regional strategies.*

The new set of scenarios, evaluated against an updated baseline and described through the use of new visualization tools would provide the basis for a new round of public outreach. This outreach would be designed to solicit feedback not only on the scenarios

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themselves but on options for regional implementation steps such as those outlined above.

- *Conclude FY09 with a report on feedback and recommendations for incorporating scenario planning activities into the regional planning process.*

This feedback would be compiled into a report that would be presented to the TPB and inform consideration of regional implementation steps.

Feedback Requested from the Scenario Study Task Force

TPB staff is seeking feedback from this task force on the above proposals to inform development of the FY09 UPWP. Some general conclusions would be useful before the end of January. Based on input from this task force over the next two months, staff can develop a more detailed work plan for Scenario Study activities in FY09 for incorporation into the FY09 UPWP, scheduled for approval by the TPB in March of 2008.