



# COALITION FOR SMARTER GROWTH

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## TESTIMONY TO THE TPB REGARDING THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES PLAN and I-95 AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

June 15, 2011

My first comments relate to the proposed Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. The TPB and COG as a whole have made a lot of progress on defining a more sustainable approach to transportation and land use. The goals and performance standards in the draft scope are generally very good. Yet we are uneasy about the following:

- 1) This planning process is still too disconnected from the implementation process of the Region Forward committee.
- 2) No recognition is given to the fact that RMA scenarios, the What Would it Take Scenario and the Aspirations Scenario all demonstrated that LAND USE and TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT are the most effective in reducing VMT and trip lengths, and increasing non-auto mode shares. Why does it rely on the existing trend forecasts rather than the findings of the scenarios? Why doesn't this process commit to a final integrated smart growth plan?
- 3) The process does not commit to meeting the regional goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the great urgency of addressing this massive problem. Nor does it address the urgency of reducing oil consumption.
- 4) The document once again calls land use a long term solution. That's incorrect. The changes in land use and development -- most notably in DC, Arlington and Alexandria in the past decade -- have been phenomenal and moved along much faster than any transportation project I know of. Now that we have strong regional consensus for TOD and more experience implementing TOD the land use changes can take place even more quickly.
- 5) The process is another marathon of 2 years on top of 15 previous years of planning; and finally, in 2014 it is supposed to influence our CLRP, but why not before then.
- 6) Even so it may still not influence the CLRP, because what will this process do to change the dominance of state DOT's in setting priorities well before they reach the TPB?

We recommend much more specific commitments to a smart growth outcome based upon the accumulated work of COG, rather than another open ended, marathon process. We also recommend that you hire the best national firm for integrating TOD and transportation.

Turning to another subject, please see page 3 of Item 11 to see the impact of the poorly conceived I-95 HOT lane and I-66 projects. It appears to have a very negative impact on HOV, it reduces transit trips because transit funding in the 95 HOT lane project is being stripped out, and it leads to movement of job destinations out of the core. I doubt VMT will really decrease given the auto dependent pattern that will result. As conceived, these projects are a recipe for more sprawl and are completely at odds with TPB goals. The TPB should oppose the conclusions-based approach used for the 95 HOT lanes project. You should insist that a full range of HOV and transit scenarios be studied including routes all the way to DC. You should insist on a full EIS, not an EA. Thank you.