

# **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 16, 2008**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board

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

**RE:** Letters Sent/Received Since the February 20<sup>th</sup> TPB Meeting

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

Attachments

April 8, 2008

## \$8 Traffic Fee for Manhattan Gets Nowhere

By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE

ALBANY — Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's far-reaching plan to ease traffic in Manhattan died here on Monday in a closed conference room on the third floor of the Capitol.

Democratic members of the State Assembly held one final meeting to debate the merits of Mr. Bloomberg's plan and found overwhelming and persistent opposition. The plan would have charged drivers \$8 to enter a congestion zone in Manhattan south of 60th Street during peak hours.

Mr. Bloomberg and his supporters, including civic, labor and environmental organizations, viewed the proposal as a bold and essential step to help manage the city's inexorable growth.

But the mayor's plan was strongly opposed by a broad array of politicians from Queens, Brooklyn and New York's suburbs, who viewed the proposed congestion fee as a regressive measure that overwhelmingly benefited affluent Manhattanites.

"The congestion pricing bill did not have anywhere near a majority of the Democratic conference, and will not be on the floor of the Assembly," Sheldon Silver, the Assembly speaker, said after the meeting.

The plan's collapse was a severe blow to Mr. Bloomberg's environmental agenda and political legacy. The mayor introduced his plan a year ago as the signature proposal of a 127-item program for sustainable city growth that helped raise his national profile. Without approval from Albany, the city now stands to lose about \$354 million worth of federal money that would have financed the system for collecting the fee and helped to pay for new bus routes and other traffic mitigation measures.

After Mr. Silver announced the plan's demise, a statement was released by Mary E. Peters, the federal transportation secretary, indicating that her department would now seek to distribute those funds to traffic-fighting proposals in other cities.

New York also hoped to use revenues from congestion pricing to finance billions of dollars in subway expansion and other improvements by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, money that must now come from somewhere else.

Assemblyman Mark S. Weprin, a Queens Democrat, said that in discussing the issue with his colleagues, "the word 'elitist' came up a number of times." His constituents, Mr. Weprin said, almost uniformly opposed the measure, viewing it as a tax on their ability to move around their own city.

Mr. Weprin estimated that opinion among Assembly Democrats ran four to one against the plan. No formal vote was taken at the closed meeting.

Prospects for the bill returning any time soon appear dim.

It was the latest defeat for Mr. Bloomberg from Albany, which in 2005 dashed the mayor's dreams of building a football stadium on the West Side and bringing the 2012 Olympics to New York.

The mayor has appeared increasingly frustrated with the situation in Albany in recent days and did not appear publicly after the measure's defeat. He released an angry statement shortly after the rejection.

"It takes a special type of cowardice for elected officials to refuse to stand up and vote their conscience on an issue that has been debated, and amended significantly to resolve many outstanding issues, for more than a year," Mr. Bloomberg said. "Every New Yorker has a right to know if the person they send to Albany was for or against better transit and cleaner air."

But even in the Republican-controlled State Senate, the plan did not receive much consideration. Out of deference to Mr. Bloomberg, who has been an ally and financial patron of Senate Republicans, the Senate majority leader, Joseph L. Bruno, pushed for a floor vote on the legislation Monday afternoon. But Senate Democrats refused to take the floor, forestalling any vote.

That move followed a year's worth of cajoling and brinkmanship between opponents and supporters of the plan, which evolved significantly — but, it turned out, not significantly enough — from the version Mr. Bloomberg proposed last April.

Supporters ultimately agreed to shrink the zone in which the fees would apply, to the area south of 60th Street in Manhattan, instead of south of 86th Street. They also added a small charge on taxicab and limousine trips through the zone, as well as a tax credit for low-income residents.

But many issues remained unresolved. Critics also objected to the elimination of a sunset provision, which would have required the plan to win approval again after three years. City officials said that such a provision would have precluded long-term bond financing for capital improvement projects.

Mr. Silver, a frequent antagonist of Mr. Bloomberg's who in 2005 blocked the mayor's plan to redevelop the West Side railyards, pre-empted criticism that he was personally to blame for the plan's defeat, saying that he favored some kind of congestion proposal but that the mayor's plan simply lacked enough support to pass. "Let me be clear: If I were making the decision alone, I might have made a different decision," Mr. Silver said.

Ultimately, the battle lines over the plan remained almost unchanged during the yearlong debate over the project, despite multiple rounds of public hearings, reams of studies and an aggressive lobbying campaign by Mr. Bloomberg and his allies. Indeed, many opponents said they resented the pressure and threats that they said emanated from Mr. Bloomberg's side, including hints that the mayor would back primary candidates to run against politicians who opposed congestion pricing.

The mayor's allies recently formed a political action committee to finance those campaigns.

Those efforts, supporters and opponents agreed, illustrated the gulf between Mr. Bloomberg and lawmakers in Albany, where the mayor sometimes seemed to miscalculate how far his power and prestige could carry him.

Many Democrats in the Legislature felt that the mayor's demeanor in private meetings was condescending.

Some opponents wondered at Mr. Bloomberg's political strategy, noting that they hardly expected to be punished by their constituents for siding with them.

"I'd be very happy running for re-election letting everybody know that I was an advocate against congestion pricing," said Assemblyman Rory I. Lancman, a Queens Democrat.

Ultimately, some supporters said privately, the same qualities that liberated Mr. Bloomberg to propose such a far-reaching plan — his independence from established power-brokers and detachment from traditional politicking — are what doomed the plan to failure.

"It doesn't really work up here, and it didn't help it at all," said Assemblyman William F. Boyland, Jr., a Brooklyn Democrat who opposed the plan.

Some Assembly Democrats said that by Monday, even many of the supporters of the plan had significant reservations about it. Debate had veered from the issues of traffic and pollution, they said, to advocates emphasizing the need to finance badly needed mass transit projects. That further alienated suburban officials, whose constituents would have borne much of the cost of the fees but reaped little benefit from those projects.

*Reporting was contributed by Diane Cardwell, Danny Hakim, Trymaine Lee and Jeremy W. Peters.*

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April 1, 2008

Mr. Michael Knapp  
Chairman/Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street Northeast  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Thank you for writing to express your support for a rail line to Dulles Airport. I appreciate hearing your good ideas.

As you may know, this project recently hit a significant roadblock. Please know that I will keep the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) support for the extension in mind should the issue come before the Senate again.

Public transportation is an important issue for me. In the state of Maryland, I have worked to reduce pollution and fight the traffic gridlock by securing increased funding for Maryland transportation projects. Some of these projects include: the expansion of MARC commuter rail service, continued construction of the Washington Metro into Maryland, and initiating a light rail line in Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties.

Again, I appreciate hearing from you. If I can be of assistance in the future, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator

BAM:jac



March 20, 2008

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Hon. Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Suite 300  
777 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Consideration of Public-Private Partnerships

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As Executive Director of The National Council for Public-Private Partnerships (NCPPT), I would like to personally applaud your efforts and the efforts of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) for considering public-private partnerships and tolling to deal with the enormous challenge we are currently facing regarding the region's transportation infrastructure dilemma. We realize that public-private partnerships are only one solution among many options.

There are six critical components of any successful public-private partnership (PPP): political leadership, public sector involvement, a well-thought out plan, a dedicated income stream, communication with stakeholders and selecting the right partner. Your actions clearly touch on several of these.

There are hundreds of examples where tolling has been successful in generating revenues to maintain transportation infrastructure. We could point to the Dulles Greenway in Northern Virginia, and the 91 Express Lanes and SR 125 toll projects in California.

If you would like further information on PPPs in transportation projects, we would be delighted to make a presentation at one of your future board meetings and answer any questions that you may have. Again, we would like to thank you for your consideration of PPPs and look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to visit our website for more information on public-private partnerships: <http://ncppp.org>

**Staff:**

Richard Norment,  
Executive Director  
Krystine McGrath,  
Director of Programs Development  
Chastity Nelson,  
Office Manager  
Katherine Pfeifer,  
Research Associate

Sincerely,

  
Richard B. Norment

cc: Ken Butler, NCPPT President

**NCPPT membership** includes over 160 organizations, 40 percent of which are from the public sector



AUBRYN BEDNAR  
ACTING CLERK TO  
THE COUNTY BOARD

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March 13, 2008

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Mendelson:

On behalf of the County Board, thank you for your letter regarding Arlington County's contribution to COG's "Street Smart" campaign. I appreciate you taking the time to bring this issue to the Board's attention. I am happy to confirm that the County of Arlington is already a contributor to this campaign.

Again, thank you for writing. If I can help in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

J. Walter Tejada  
Chairman

Mr. Ron Kirby



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
1401 EAST BROAD STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

David S. Ekern, P.E.  
COMMISSIONER

February 13, 2008

Mr. George Schoener  
Executive Director  
I-95 Corridor Coalition  
c/o Ms. Patty Reich  
Telvent Farradyne, Inc.  
3206 Tower Oaks Blvd.  
Rockville, MD 20852

Subject: I-95 Corridor Coalition/Maryland DOT Truck Parking Initiative Proposal

Dear Mr. Schoener:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is pleased to participate in and support the proposal being transmitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation on behalf of the I-95 Corridor Coalition to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in response to its Truck Parking Initiative (TPI) solicitation of November 16, 2007. The addition of parking capacity and information systems that will inform interstate truck drivers of parking availability will help eliminate safety hazards caused by illegal parking on highway shoulders and help reduce driver fatigue-related accidents and fatalities. We believe this corridor-wide project will also enable the trucking industry to gain efficiencies in travel plans, particularly in congested urban areas.

Along the I-95 corridor in Virginia, truck volumes are increasing, while long-term truck parking supply struggles to keep up. A 2004 study by the Virginia Transportation Research Council indicated that long-term truck parking demands could exceed the available supply along the entire corridor by 40% in year 2010. A 2007 update to Virginia's I-95 corridor truck parking inventory revealed that truck parking spaces are increasing in some areas (e.g. a new 100+ space truck stop recently opened at Exit 58), but decreasing in others (e.g. a recent buyout of a major truck stop at Exit 133 resulted in the loss of over 200 truck parking spaces). The net outlook is not positive, and the trend for parking demand to outpace the supply has resulted in numerous VDOT safety rest areas and private truck parking facilities being filled to capacity on a regular basis at night.

As an expansion of VDOT's pilot truck parking grant application last year ("Truck Parking Initiative for I-95 Caroline County, Virginia" submitted to FHWA, April 30, 2007), which was a singular localized interstate interchange approach proposed amongst many Virginia priorities, VDOT now fully advocates and supports this much broader interstate corridor approach as being a far better and more comprehensive solution to meeting truck parking demands and concerns. Our participation in I-95 Corridor Coalition



Mr. George Schoener  
I-95 Corridor Coalition/Maryland DOT Truck Parking Initiative Proposal  
February 13, 2008  
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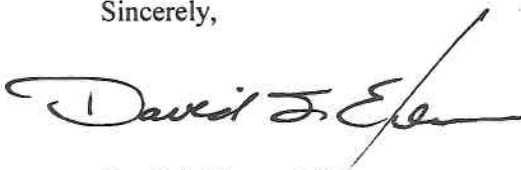
activities recognizes that the solution to some problems, like the inadequate supply of safe, convenient truck parking, transcends state boundaries.

With the goal of achieving partnership solutions in mind, VDOT is pleased to offer the following summary of resource commitments and stakeholder endorsements to partner with the I-95 Coalition in preparing an award-winning proposal:

- **Financial Commitment** – Should the FHWA issue an award to the I-95 Corridor Coalition, VDOT's Safety Rest Area Program is prepared to commit up to \$50,000 per year for the duration of this project (up to four years) toward the implementation of long-term truck parking solutions in Virginia
- **511 Traveler Information System** – VDOT is prepared to integrate the real-time data from this program into our existing 511 traveler information system as part of the I-95 Coalition's proposed, multi-pronged communication strategy to inform truck drivers of truck parking conditions along the corridor
- **Unanimous MPO Support** – VDOT has collaborated with each of the three, Virginia-based metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in Central Virginia (Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Tri-Cities) to obtain their written support for this grant application
- **State Trucking Association Support** – VDOT has also obtained the support of the Virginia Trucking Association, the state affiliate to the American Trucking Association

We look forward to working with the FHWA and the I-95 Corridor Coalition, including our neighboring State DOT's, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation authorities, trucking organizations and other stakeholders on this endeavor to help solve this matter of significant public interest and safety, not only for the purposes of this project, but over the long term.

Sincerely,



David S. Ekern, P.E.  
Commissioner

cc: Mary Lynn Fischer, Ph. D., VDOT, Director of Multimodal Transportation Planning Office  
Constance S. Sorrell, VDOT, Chief of Systems Operations  
Thomas P. Hawthorne, P.E., VDOT Richmond District Administrator  
David E. Ogle, VDOT Fredericksburg District Administrator  
Morteza Salehi, VDOT Northern Virginia District Administrator  
Dennis W. Heuer, P.E., VDOT Hampton Roads District Administrator  
Mr. Dennis K. Morris, Crater Planning District Commission, Executive Director  
Mr. Robert Wilson, George Washington Regional Commission, Executive Director  
Ms. Jo A. Evans, Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, Executive Director (acting)  
Mr. Ronald F. Kirby, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Director of Transportation Planning



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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Ranking Republican Member

David Heynsfeld, Chief of Staff  
Ward W. McCarragher, Chief Counsel

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

March 19, 2008

Mr. Ron Kirby  
Transportation Director  
Metropolitan Washington COG  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Kirby:

I would like to invite you to testify at a hearing before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure titled "Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas."

I ask that you testify to the full Committee in your capacity as Transportation Director of the Metropolitan Washington COG. The hearing will take place on Wednesday, April 9, 2008 at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building (HOB).

Witnesses must submit 50 copies of written testimony to Room B-370A Rayburn HOB, to the attention of Peter Gould, by close of business on Friday, April 4, 2008. In addition, 150 copies of testimony must be delivered to 2165 Rayburn HOB, to the attention of Jimmy Miller, by close of business on Monday, April 7, 2008. Name, mailing address, organization represented, and telephone number must appear on the face of the testimony. Please be advised that your draft written testimony will be distributed to Committee Members prior to the hearing for their hearing preparation.

For the purpose of complying with House Rule XI, clause 2(e)(4), requiring each committee to make its publications available in electronic form to the maximum extent practicable, each witness is strongly urged to submit testimony in Microsoft Word format (i.e. copy on disk).

Mr. Ron Kirby  
March 19, 2008  
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Witnesses are asked to limit their testimony to a five-minute oral summary of their statements. The full written statement will be included in the printed record of the hearing.

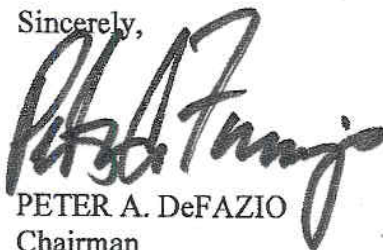
If you intend to make a PowerPoint presentation or use other visual aids for your testimony, please submit an electronic copy of the document to Peter Gould at [Peter.Gould@mail.house.gov](mailto:Peter.Gould@mail.house.gov) Friday, April 4, 2008.

If you need special accommodations, please contact Jimmy Miller at (202) 225-4472 at least four days before the hearing.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Amy Scarton, Counsel for the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, at (202) 225-9989. Our facsimile number is (202) 226-0224.

I look forward to your testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. DeFAZIO". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

PETER A. DeFAZIO  
Chairman

“Transportation Challenges in Metropolitan Areas”

Testimony before the  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives

Ronald F. Kirby

Director of Transportation Planning  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Ronald Kirby, and I am the Director of Transportation Planning for the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG). I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today.

The Transportation Planning Board was formed in 1965 in response to a requirement of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 for the establishment of official Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). In 1966 the TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, which provides support for the TPB's MPO activities and responsibilities in the Washington Metropolitan Area. The TPB is one of 385 MPOs currently serving urbanized areas throughout the nation, and is an active member of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO).

Membership of the TPB includes representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, 20 local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies; 40 board members in all. Most board actions are taken by one vote per voting member, although a population-weighted voting procedure is used if requested by any voting member.

The long-range transportation plan developed by the TPB must meet several federal requirements related to the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation authorization bill passed in 2005. The bill established new requirements and reaffirmed existing rules for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in developing long-range transportation plans. Key planning requirements are:

- Financial Constraint:

The long-range plan must be based on revenue sources that are "reasonably expected to be available."

- Air Quality Conformity:

Projects in the plan taken collectively must contribute to air quality improvement goals for the region.

- Public Participation:

Adequate information and public comment opportunities must be provided.

- Environmental Justice:

The plan is assessed for impacts on low-income, minority and disabled populations.

- Congestion Management:

The plan includes strategies to ensure that existing and future transportation facilities are used efficiently in order to reduce the need for highway capacity increases for single-occupant vehicles.

- Transportation Safety:

SAFETEA-LU added safety as a separate factor to be considered in the creation of the plan.

- Freight Planning:

Full consideration is given to freight and goods movement.

- Environmental Consultation and Mitigation:

Natural resource, conservation, environmental protection and historic preservation agencies are consulted regarding the development of the plan.

The transportation challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area are common to many large growing metropolitan areas throughout the country. Over the current forecast period of 2008 through 2030, increases in population and jobs of 26 percent and 31 percent respectively will lead to additional vehicles, trips, and congestion on the region's transportation system.

Given funding constraints, highway lane miles are expected to increase by only 13 percent, while VMT is expected to rise 23 percent, resulting in a 41 percent rise in lane miles of congestion. Nearly all of this increased congestion will occur in the suburbs, with the inner suburbs experiencing the worst congestion in the region. The outer suburbs will experience the most dramatic increase in congestion, with a more than 100 percent increase in lane miles of congestion by 2030. Transit work trips are forecast to increase by 31 percent, as an increasing number of people are expected to use transit to commute to work. This will create even more crowding on the Metrorail system, since the ability of the region to expand transit capacity is limited by funding constraints.

Emissions of ozone precursors and fine particulates from motor vehicles are declining steadily due primarily to cleaner vehicles and fuels, and the region is on track to attain national standards for these pollutants. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles continue to increase, however. While the recently adopted CAFÉ standards will reduce the rate of growth in greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, future emissions will still be well above current levels unless additional reduction strategies are adopted. To achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gases, such strategies must include a combination of more fuel-efficient vehicles, alternatives to petroleum-based fuels, and changes in travel behavior. We have yet to identify a set of strategies that will come close to achieving the reduction in greenhouse gases that we are told will be needed over the next several decades.

In order to ensure that long-range transportation plans meet the SAFETEA-LU financial constraint requirement, MPOs conduct comprehensive analyses of the construction, preservation, and operations costs of all existing and new facilities in their plans, as well as of all the revenues that are “reasonably expected to be available.” In the Washington region, 70 percent of all available revenues are needed for system operations and preservation; only 30 percent can be applied to new capacity. One of the major challenges currently facing states, MPOs, and transit agencies is rapid escalation in construction and maintenance costs. Cost increases of 13 percent per year over the past few years have in many cases more than offset the modest increases in overall transportation funding levels during that period. Since operations and preservation are top priorities, cost increases and funding limitations result in fewer resources for new capacity.

Transportation revenues projected to be available to the Washington region over the period of the long-range plan come from several different sources: federal (27 percent), state (32 percent), local government (17 percent), transit fares (17 percent), and tolls (7 percent). The share of funding from tolls has grown from just one percent in 2003 to seven percent currently due to the addition of three major new highway projects which will have tolls that vary by time of day to manage congestion: the Inter-County Connector in Suburban Maryland, and High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on the Capital Beltway and I-95/395 in Northern Virginia.

While the TPB is currently analyzing future scenarios with more extensive use of highway pricing, our studies indicate that toll revenues would be needed to finance construction, operation, and preservation of the toll facilities, along with expanded transit facilities to provide alternatives to travelers unwilling or unable to pay the tolls. Such toll revenues would not in any way substitute for other sources of transportation funding, all of which will need to be sustained and increased if the region’s transportation challenges are to be addressed.

The federal share of the overall funding stream plays a critical role in supporting the preservation, maintenance, and expansion of major highway and transit facilities throughout the region. The TPB is counting on a continuing strong federal role and partnership to address the region’s transportation challenges.

A number of proposals and recommendations are currently being advanced for refocusing the federal surface transportation program on key national priorities when the program is reauthorized next year. From the perspective of the Washington region three major goals stand out as national priorities around which the federal program could be structured:

- Preservation and operation of the existing system.
- High value Investments in new infrastructure capacity; and
- Support for metropolitan areas to address pressing congestion, environmental and social challenges.

Ensuring the structural integrity, safety and reliability of the nation's primary highway, transit and intercity freight and passenger rail systems is essential to economic growth, environmental quality, and social development. States and local governments need the strong financial support and partnership of the federal government in preservation and operations of existing systems, most of which were built largely with federal funding. In the Washington region increased federal funding and participation is urgently needed to help preserve and maintain the Metrorail system, upon which much of the region's commuting and other economic and social activity depends.

The nation currently lacks a rational, robust program structure for prioritizing and providing financial support to high value investments in new infrastructure capacity. With the mid-twentieth century goals of building the Interstate highway system and recapitalizing urban transit systems accomplished, it is time to replace the modally-oriented program delivery structure designed around those earlier purposes with one suited to the challenges of today and tomorrow. A mode-neutral federal discretionary program is needed to select and support infrastructure investments aimed at critical chokepoints in surface passenger and freight transportation systems. "Mode-neutral" is essential for this program: sometimes the best investment to address a highway congestion problem may be new transit capacity or relief of a bottleneck on the inter-city freight rail system. It makes no sense to try to address the challenges of a major urban corridor with separate modal programs, each with its own evaluation criteria and program requirements.

In the Washington region we would welcome the opportunity to submit to the US Department of Transportation multi-modal investment packages for evaluation under comprehensive benefit/cost criteria which reflect national as well as state and local priorities. Federal financial participation and partnership is critical to the provision of major infrastructure improvements such as the Woodrow Wilson Bridges, extension of Metrorail to Dulles International Airport, support for major BRAC-related land development in the region, and even for some tolled facilities such as the Inter County Connector. Setting up a new federal mode-neutral discretionary program to replace



the current patchwork of modal programs and earmarks is certainly a major undertaking. However, there is an abundance of expertise, experience, and interest within the transportation community and other public and private sector programs which could be focused on this endeavor as part of the coming reauthorization cycle.

MPOs have long believed that in addition to formula funding for metropolitan planning, the federal transportation program should provide formula-based funding directly to metropolitan areas for project selection and implementation. Such funding would empower metropolitan areas to turn strategies developed in response to federal planning requirements such as those listed earlier into real projects “on the ground.”

A relatively small-scale but nevertheless ground-breaking provision of the SAFETEA-LU legislation provides a model for how a new metropolitan transportation program could be structured and administered. Prior to SAFETEA-LU the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) discretionary program administered by the Federal Transit Program for metropolitan areas had become unwieldy and heavily earmarked. SAFETEA-LU restructured JARC along with a new “New Freedom” program into formula programs allocated to metropolitan areas in accordance with urbanized area population. Metropolitan areas were required to designate recipients who could administer these programs through a transparent and competitive project selection process. The TPB was among the first of almost 30 MPOs that sought and received these designations. As a result, for the first time in its forty-year history the TPB is now a direct recipient of federal program funds for the implementation of capital and operating projects, and can move forward directly with strategies developed in response to the planning process and stakeholder input.

While these JARC and New Freedom programs are quite small in dollar terms (just a few million dollars annually for the entire Washington region), they have led to the creation of a program delivery mechanism that could be the basis for a much broader and more comprehensive program of project selection and implementation at the metropolitan level. A number of other disparate elements of the current federal program could be “bundled” together with JARC and New Freedom into a metropolitan program that would bring project selection and implementation closer to the local government and stakeholder groups who are their main constituents and beneficiaries. Examples include funding devoted to such priorities as mobile source emissions reduction; pedestrian safety; coordination of transportation operations and incident management; promotion of commuter ridesharing, telecommuting, and other alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle; and, perhaps most important of all, the coordination of transportation and land use planning at the local and metropolitan levels.

The forthcoming reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation provides an opportunity to replace the current overly complex, unwieldy, and outdated program structure with a new program structure designed to respond to current national, state, and local transportation priorities. I hope my suggested “three-goal”

program structure will make a constructive contribution to the extensive ongoing discussions already focused on redesigning and streamlining the federal surface transportation program.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express the appreciation of the MPO community for the strong and growing support the Congress has provided for metropolitan transportation planning in the ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU authorizations. Federal planning resources and requirements in these bills have provided a firm foundation for MPOs to assume increased responsibilities, not only for planning but also for some key new components of program delivery that could help in the near term to address the transportation challenges facing our metropolitan areas.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify before you this morning.