

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: Staff Proposal for FY2009 TLC Program

DATE: January 10, 2007

Review of Options Presented at December 19, 2007 Meeting

In advance of the December 19 meeting of the TPB Scenario Study Task Force, staff circulated a memorandum summarizing the accomplishments of the TLC pilot program, detailing the current status of the program and its relevance to the Scenario Study, and presenting a series of options for refinement/expansion of the program in FY2009. That memorandum, dated December 13, 2007, is attached. As outlined on pages 2-4 of that memo, the three options included the following:

- 1. Preserve the program's current structure while encouraging outside funding for modest expansion;*
- 2. Enhance the current program to provide greater focus on implementation activities, including recommending implementation priorities following each planning project, and developing an implementation "toolkit" to address key implementation issues; and*
- 3. Make identification of priority capital projects an explicit aim of the TLC planning projects and advocate at the regional level for completion of these projects.*

As noted at the December 19 task force meeting, the three options are not mutually exclusive and in fact could build upon each other in the order presented. The consensus among the members of the task force appeared to be a desire for the program to move in the direction of both options 1 and 2, with further exploration of the possibility of option 3. This proposal describes in detail how TPB staff would seek to implement those goals in FY2009.

Proposed TLC Program for FY2009

It is proposed that the TLC Program for FY2009 should include three basic components: modest expansion of the existing program; program enhancements focused on implementation; and exploration of additional linkages to the regional project prioritization process.

1. Modest Expansion of the Program

TPB staff continues to hear from local jurisdiction staff, elected officials, and consultants who have been involved with the TLC Program that the modest budgets and short timeframes of the TLC technical assistance projects have on balance a positive effect, in that they encourage focused effort on a discrete planning task of use to local staff. However, feedback from the program has also indicated that a modest increase in the allocation for each project would be beneficial in optimizing the projects' effectiveness. Staff proposes, therefore, that the FY2009 budget for TLC technical assistance allow for completion of six technical assistance projects, again distributed around the Washington Region, at a maximum level of \$30,000 each. This represents an increase from the FY2008 level of six projects at a maximum of \$20,000 each. This increase is not seen as fundamentally altering the types or character of the projects to be completed through the program, nor would the administration of the technical assistance projects by TPB staff be changed in any significant manner.

In addition, TPB staff will continue to pursue other funding sources so that additional projects might be completed. Staff will be submitting an application for additional funding through the Virginia Multimodal Grants Program to enable more projects to be completed in Northern Virginia jurisdictions in FY2009 (likely to be projects drawn from those submitted in response to our FY2008 TLC call for projects). A grant of \$100,000 from this program allowed for five additional Northern Virginia projects to be selected that could not be funded in the FY2007 TLC pilot round. These five projects are currently underway. Additional funds from the State of Maryland and/or the District of Columbia could be handled in a similar manner, with TPB staff coordinating consultant-led technical assistance projects in those jurisdictions at a similar funding level, with the administrative costs borne by the TLC Program element in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The proposed funding level assumes the cost of TPB staff administration of some additional technical assistance projects funded through outside sources; if the TPB were to receive significantly more funding support for such projects, this administrative allocation may need to be revisited at a future date.

2. Program Enhancements Focused on Implementation

The total proposed funding level of \$355,000 for the TLC Program element in the FY2009 UPWP (including \$180,000 for technical assistance projects) provides for administration of the technical assistance projects and maintenance of the TLC Clearinghouse website by TPB staff and the TLC Program lead consultant, Reconnecting America. This amount also provides support for staff and consultant work on additional tools that would be useful to local planners and the region's transportation implementing agencies as they deal with the challenges of land-use and transportation coordination. Two new activities can be undertaken in this regard: identification of implementation priorities as part of the TLC projects; and development of implementation toolkits to address such challenges as housing affordability and public concerns about development density.

a) Identification of Implementation Priorities in TLC Assistance Projects

Staff will work with the local project leads and consultants for each technical assistance project to identify implementation priorities as part of the TLC projects. These priorities may include further planning needs, policy initiatives, and even capital projects identified as key to the implementation of plan recommendations. Upon the completion of all of the FY2009 TLC technical assistance projects, TPB staff will produce a report reviewing the projects and compiling these implementation priorities into a single list that will be provided to the TPB. While this priority list will not be regionally comprehensive, it can serve as an implementation guide for local planners and transportation implementing agencies for ensuring appropriate action in the areas covered by the projects. TPB staff will track implementation progress over time and report periodically to the TPB as part of regular updates on the TLC Program.

b) Development of Implementation Toolkits

Staff will work to develop in FY2009 at least two “toolkits” addressing issues that have been identified as key to the success of local planning efforts and the implementation of regional goals. Many of these issues were identified in the Scenario Study Outreach Feedback Summary Report and recommendations of the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee, and have been discussed at meetings of the task force. They include the challenges of addressing housing affordability and public concerns about development density, among other topics of concern.

The TLC Program website (at www.mwcog.org/tlc) already provides national case studies and best practices information about some of these issues. However, the development of online or written toolkits tailored for use by jurisdictions in the Washington Region, with specific policy and programmatic ideas and information, could be of considerably more value. TPB staff will continue to work with the Scenario Study Task Force along with TLC technical assistance project participants and other local staff to determine the most useful content and form for these toolkits.

The “Density Presentation” project for the Cities of Takoma Park and College Park selected in the pilot TLC technical assistance round may also provide a basis for development of further tools for local governments. Development of this presentation is nearing completion and it will be made available to other localities following initial use at public meetings in Takoma Park and College Park. With its balanced and informative summary of the issue of density and the relation between land use, transportation, and neighborhood design, the presentation is an example of a regionally applicable tool that could be the first of a series of such tools produced through the TLC Program.

3. Exploration of Additional Linkages to the Regional Project Prioritization Process

TPB staff will continue to provide the TPB and the Scenario Study Task Force with information about strategies used in other metropolitan areas to coordinate transportation and land-use planning and target transportation investment on the basis of regional goals. As the TLC Program grows and more planning projects are completed in more jurisdictions around the region, it may become appropriate to make identification of capital projects a more explicit

priority of the TLC technical assistance projects, and seek the inclusion of these capital projects in the regional CLRP and TIP.

Next Steps

A draft outline of the FY2009 UPWP reflecting the above TLC work activities will be presented to the TPB at its January 16, 2008 meeting. A complete draft of the FY2009 UPWP is scheduled to be presented at the February 20 TPB meeting, and a final version will be presented for approval by the TPB at its March 19 meeting. Based on comments received from the Scenario Study Task Force, TPB staff will review and refine the TLC Program work item in the draft FY2009 UPWP for presentation to the TPB at its February 20 and March 19 meetings.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Scenario Study Task Force

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

SUBJECT: Status of the TPB Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program and
Alternatives for the Future

DATE: December 13, 2007

Current Status of the TLC Program

The pilot phase of the TLC program, which was included in the TPB's FY07 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), resulted in:

- The launch of a TLC Program website that includes national best practices information and a regional project database;
- The completion of five location-specific technical assistance projects by consultants contracted by the TPB; and
- The development of a public presentation about issues related to density and infill redevelopment that will be available for use around the region.

In addition, the TPB received \$100,000 through the Virginia Multimodal Grants Program to complete five additional location-specific technical assistance projects for Northern Virginia jurisdictions; these projects are getting underway and are scheduled to be completed by spring of 2008.

At its October 17, 2007 meeting, the TPB approved language in the FY08 UPWP that extends the TLC Program at the same budget level (\$255,000) with some minor modifications to the allocation of funds and the number of technical assistance projects to be completed in the FY08 round. Under this amended UPWP program element, the TPB will contract with consultants for the completion of at least six location-specific technical assistance projects of a value of up to \$20,000 each.

Given that the technical assistance projects in the pilot (FY07) round of the TLC Program were completed in June 2008, and the evaluation of the program was completed in September 2008, the TPB did not choose to significantly alter the program when it amended the FY08 UPWP on October 17, 2007. The FY09 UPWP, however, presents an opportunity for the TPB to modify

and/or expand the TLC Program should it choose to do so. The Scenario Study Task Force has an opportunity to provide recommendations for the full Board to consider as it determines the future course for the program.

The TLC Program and the Scenario Study

From its inception the TLC Program has been linked to the Scenario Study, and reflects a desire by many observers and stewards of the study on the TPB and related committees to move from “what if” to “how to”. The Washington Region is already nationally known for successes in concentrating mixed-use development in regional activity centers, especially those served by transit, though many additional opportunities exist around the region, and hurdles still remain in addressing community-level challenges. The TLC Program represents a way for the TPB to assist local jurisdictions in implementing this strategy, which the Scenario Study indicates could have regional benefits in reducing congestion.

Although there are other possibilities for implementation steps arising from the Scenario Study, the TLC Program is presently the most significant tool available to the TPB in addressing the “how to” challenges. If future Scenario Study activities identify specific areas or transportation needs that are regional priorities, or provide more focused regional land use and transportation policy recommendations, the TLC Program could be further refined as a tool for implementing those priorities and policy recommendations.

Options for the TLC Program in FY09

While the nature of the TLC Program for FY08 will be very similar to the pilot round, it would be possible to move the program in a somewhat different direction beginning in FY09. Of course, one possibility is to leave the program as is, especially given that the pilot round was quite successful and well received. However, several members of the TPB as well as members of the public and the CAC have expressed a desire for the TLC Program to expand and set more ambitious goals.

Other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) across the country have implemented programs similar to the TPB’s TLC Program, and the knowledge from these examples provided much guidance during the development of the TLC pilot phase. These cases from other metropolitan areas may also suggest ways in which the TPB’s program could be refined and/or expanded to meet future needs and regional goals identified through the Scenario Study. Accordingly, the review of practices by other MPOs that was conducted during the development of the TLC Program in summer 2006 has recently been updated by staff with any new information that could be obtained. For the purposes of this overview, “similar programs” included any program administered by an MPO that features a regional selection process and funds transportation projects which encourage regionally desired land use patterns.

Based on the experience to date with the TPB’s TLC Program, information about similar programs in other metropolitan areas, and knowledge of the unique circumstances present in the

Washington area (particularly in regard to allocation of capital funds), staff has developed the following slate of options for modifications to the TLC Program in FY09.

1. Preserve the program's current structure while encouraging outside funding for modest expansion.

This option would continue the TLC Program as an effort that funds technical assistance for planning projects, based on relatively broad criteria. It would also continue efforts by the TPB to solicit funding for TLC planning projects in addition to maintaining or possibly expanding the funding included in the UPWP. The \$100,000 received from the Virginia Multimodal Grant Program is an example of the kind of opportunity that would continue to be pursued.

There are two sub-options within this alternative, having to do with how any additional funding, either internal or external, would be allocated:

- 1a. Use additional funding to complete more projects of the same scale (up to \$20,000)
- 1b. Use additional funding to allow for projects larger in scale (more than \$20,000)

2. Enhance the current program to provide greater focus on implementation activities, including recommending implementation priorities following each planning project, and developing an implementation "toolkit" to address key implementation issues.

This option would add to the end of each round of technical assistance projects a step in which priority implementation steps would be recommended. These action steps could include further planning study needs, additional stakeholder collaboration, recommended land use or other local policy changes, and/or transportation investment priorities. TPB staff would track implementation of these actions with the local TLC project contact in a more formal follow-up process than under the current program. Any transportation capital projects recommended as priorities would have to be brought into the regional plans via the traditional project selection processes in each jurisdiction.

Resources could be committed under this option for the preparation of an implementation "toolkit" to address such key implementation challenges as designing policies to bring development to activity centers (particularly affordable housing), and to address the different perspectives on density and congestion at the regional and local levels. Such an effort would build on the "Density Presentation" project of the TLC pilot phase, through which a public presentation on issues related to density and infill development was created for use in local jurisdictions where desired.

3. Make identification of priority capital projects an explicit aim of the TLC planning projects and advocate at the regional level for completion of these projects.

This option would make prioritization of capital projects at the regional level a specific goal of the TLC Program. A regional priority list of projects would be produced, similar

to the regional bicycle/pedestrian project priority list, along with some mechanism for moving these projects into the regional plan and toward implementation. This would be similar to programs in the Atlanta and Philadelphia metropolitan areas.

In the case of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), localities apply to have certain small areas (of a scale similar to the regional activity centers identified in the Washington Region) accepted into the program based on the conditions and needs in those areas. MPO staff then work with planners in the areas to identify planning needs and subsequently fund specific planning projects. The planning projects are geared toward identification of capital needs, which are then given priority in the regional TIP. This also enables easier tracking of the impact the program has in an area over time.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in the Philadelphia area has an application process that involves specific planning projects, but the areas in which the projects are located must meet certain criteria establishing need. The DVRPC program is focused primarily on redevelopment of blighted areas through collaborative land-use and transportation planning. Capital needs identified through planning projects in the DVRPC program are also given special priority for funding.

In other metropolitan areas, such as San Francisco and Dallas/Fort Worth, this option is taken a step further. These metropolitan areas receive sub-allocated federal funds through the Transportation Enhancements (TE) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) programs and directly fund planning *and* capital projects through TLC-like programs. Such programs can be used to address specific challenges identified through the Scenario Study and related outreach – San Francisco’s program, for example, has Affordable Housing and Transit-Oriented Development elements.

Feedback Requested from the Scenario Study Task Force

Scoping the future of the TLC Program raises questions of both scale and method. The program could continue in the same relatively modest form, providing planning assistance to a limited number of projects that could gradually grow if more resources become available. At the most ambitious level, the program could become a vehicle for completing both planning and capital projects, with detailed selection criteria and dedicated funding sources. In the middle would be an enhanced version of the current program that would continue to focus on planning projects, but would also identify and monitor implementation actions going forward, and develop toolkits designed to address key implementation challenges.

Based on feedback from this task force and other TPB committees, staff will develop a proposed TLC Program element for the FY09 UPWP.