



TPBnews

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COMMUTE CHOICE AFFECTED BY WHERE YOU LIVE

According to results from the TPB “State of the Commute Survey,” the travel mode that people select to get to and from work each day – be it driving alone, using public transit, carpooling, biking, or walking – depends largely on where they live in the region.

Conducted on a triennial basis, the TPB State of the Commute Survey is a random telephone survey of more than 6,000 workers that inquires about commuting patterns, teleworking experience, and awareness of or access to transit or other modes of transportation. This year marked the first time that the survey included cell-phone only households.

According to survey results, driving alone occurs at a

progressively higher rate for commuters who live further away from the region’s core. Fewer than half of area commuters who live in the region’s inner core – the District of Columbia, Arlington, and Alexandria – reported that they drive alone to work. By comparison, 70 percent of commuters in the region’s middle ring – Montgomery Prince George’s and Fairfax Counties – and 74 percent of commuters in the region’s outer ring – Loudoun, Prince William, Frederick, Charles, and Calvert Counties – reported driving alone to work.

The survey results also show that commuters who work in the region’s core use transit at a much higher rate than do commuters who work in the middle or outer
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TPB AND TPB STAFF HONOR THE LIFE OF KARIN FOSTER

With great sadness, the TPB and TPB staff honor the life of Karin Foster, who passed away suddenly on September 30.

Ms. Foster handled freight-related issues and served as the primary liaison to regional freight stakeholders during her 6-year tenure as a member of the TPB staff. As part of her responsibilities, she supported the TPB Freight Subcommittee, and was instrumental in convening the first ever regional Freight Forum in 2011 and in fostering the development of the subsequent “Highlighted Freights Projects List.” Ms. Foster was a diligent, enthusiastic, and steadfast worker, a highly respected colleague, and a reliable friend. She touched the lives of many people around the region, and she is – and will be – deeply missed. ♦



In memory of
Karin Foster,
dependable
colleague and
constant friend.
1977-2013.

Upcoming meetings and items of interest:

TPB Meeting: October 16, 2013

- Briefing on the Final Report of the TPB Bus On Shoulders (BOS) Task Force.
- Update on the Regional “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign.

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More information may be found at: www.mwcog.org/transportation

REGION'S LONG BRIDGE UNDER STUDY

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) was briefed at its meeting on September 18 on a District Department of Transportation (DDOT) study that assesses capacity improvements for the Long Bridge, the only freight rail crossing of the Potomac River in the Washington Region.

The Long Bridge, which was built in 1904 and is owned by freight operator CSX, handles all of the freight, commuter rail, and Amtrak passenger trains traveling between the District and Virginia. Currently, trains going up and down the east coast must share the narrow two-track crossing, which can cause backups and delays. Two thirds of all trains that cross the Long Bridge are passenger rail services provided by Amtrak and VRE. CSX could decide to increase priority for freight movement in the future, which would limit the amount of passenger traffic that crosses the Long Bridge. Since the amount of freight that passes through the region on rail is expected to increase by 64 percent by 2040, the Long Bridge is one of the potential regional bottlenecks that could inhibit growth in both freight and passenger movements.

To address the challenges of capacity and priority, DDOT applied for and received a grant from the Federal Railroad Administration, or FRA, to study potential solutions for expanding the Long Bridge. The study began with over 100 alternative configurations that were narrowed to just six through a process that included input from the public and stakeholders like CSX and Amtrak.

One of the six proposed alternatives is a “no build” option that maintains the current two-track configuration of the Long Bridge. All of DDOT’s other proposals double rail capacity from the two existing tracks to four.

In addition to the extra tracks, the five other alternatives provide a mix of river crossings for a variety of transportation modes. One alternative adds a path for pedestrians and cyclists, while others include configurations for streetcars and automobiles.

The study also proposes a series of designs to update the look of the bridge, giving it a more monumental appearance.

The study is scheduled to be completed by early 2014. ♦



The Long Bridge, built in 1904, crosses the Potomac River and serves as the only freight connection between the District and Virginia. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC.

FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

“TOP TEN” PROJECTS

In September, the Transportation Planning Board’s Freight Subcommittee released an updated list of ten highlighted road, rail, and other freight projects currently planned or underway in the Washington region to improve goods movement in coming decades.

The Subcommittee first developed its “Highlighted Freight Projects List” in 2011, and updated the list earlier this year. It includes a mix of six short-term and long-term projects from the three states in the region and the two major freight railroads that operate here – CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Eulois Cleckley, chair of the Freight Subcommittee and a planner at the District Department of Transportation, briefed the TPB on the projects on the list.

Among the most significant short-term initiatives highlighted by Cleckley and the subcommittee was reconstruction of the CSX rail tunnel under Virginia Avenue SE in the District. According to Cleckley, the reconstruction will allow for double-stack, double-track freight movements through the city. Currently, only trains with single-stacked cargo containers are capable of using the tunnel due to height restrictions, and those trains must often queue at either end waiting to use the tunnel’s single track.

Another major short-term project, this one in Virginia, aims to improve truck routes in the vicinity of Dulles Airport by widening to four lanes, and eventually to six lanes, a portion of the 18-mile “loop road” around the airport. Planners see this as a necessary step to accommodate a forecast doubling of air freight traffic at the airport by 2040.

In the long-term, Maryland is planning major upgrades to I-70 near Frederick to improve a critical truck link between the Port of Baltimore and markets in the Midwest. Norfolk Southern has plans for a multi-state effort to clear major bottlenecks, build new intermodal transfer stations, and otherwise improve efficiency on its “Crescent Corridor” connecting the Northeast and the South.

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Members of the TPB were pleased to see the updated list. Board member Phil Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, expressed some concern, however, about efforts to increase freight capacity through the District by expanding the Virginia Avenue tunnel.

“I have always thought that increasing the capacity of the Virginia Avenue tunnel makes a lot of sense,” Mendelson said. “But if we expand the capacity for freight, there’s limited capacity for the tracks that are shared by CSX and VRE and Amtrak. If you bring in more freight trains, then arguably there’s going to be less capacity for passenger trains,” he said.

Chris Zimmerman, a board member representing Arlington County, echoed Mendelson’s concerns. He urged the subcommittee to think long-term about addressing the region’s growing need for passenger service, in particular by looking at ways to separate freight traffic from passenger traffic.

According to Cleckley, these and other concerns will be addressed in the next update to the list of highlighted projects. “I think in the next round we’ll be much more expansive,” he said.

The TPB’s Freight Subcommittee was established in 2008 to look at freight-related challenges facing the region. The subcommittee convened the first-ever regional freight forum in 2011, and in the same year developed the first “highlighted projects” list. The subcommittee’s aim is to draw attention to major investments in projects important to the region’s economy that are being made or considered by the states and the freight railroads. ♦

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STATE OF COMMUTE SURVEY RESULTS

(Continued from page 1)

ring. In the core, workers also bike and walk at significantly higher rates than the surrounding areas. These results suggest that the availability of different transportation options is a major factor influencing people's decisions about mode choice.

Survey results also tell a story about teleworking, which has experienced steady growth since the first triennial survey in 2001. There are approximately 675,000 teleworkers throughout the region, a 27 percent increase from the 600,000 teleworkers in 2010. Most of the growth in telework has been generated by Federal agencies, which increased telework from 16 percent of federal workers in 2007 to 38 percent in 2013. The average telework frequency in the region is 1.4 days per week. Three in ten workers surveyed reported that their employer has a formal telework program.

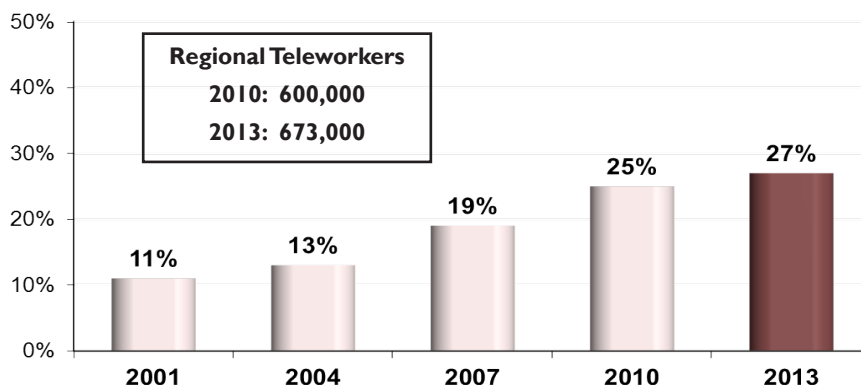
The survey also collected information about commute satisfaction and commute time. According to survey results, 64 percent of commuters are satisfied with their commute, which is a slight increase since 2010, when only 62 percent of commuters reported satisfaction with their commutes. Average commute distance and time remain the same as they did in 2010: the regional average commute distance is approximately 16 miles; the average commute time is slightly over a half-hour.

During the TPB discussion about the survey at its September 18 meeting, two TPB members offered suggestions for future data collection. Gary Erenrich of Montgomery County suggested analyzing whether or not federal workers – many of whom work in offices that are concentrated in the region's core – are commuting longer distances than employees who work in other sectors. Sam Zimbabwe, who represents the District Department of Transportation, added that it might be useful to collect data on commuting mode choice for people who live within half a mile of transit.

In response to Zimbabwe's suggestion, Transportation Planning Director Ron Kirby noted that the State of the Commute Survey is designed to be significant at the jurisdictional level, and that data has been aggregated in three categories: core, inner-, and outer-jurisdiction, which he said provides a broad brush picture of the region. He added that TPB also conducts geographically focused surveys that allow for a more detailed analysis of selected smaller areas, and that TPB members are welcome to offer suggestions for places where these focused surveys should occur.

The 2013 survey marked the fifth triennial State of the Commute survey to have been conducted since 2001. A draft technical report summarizing the results of the survey is available, and will be finalized and published in 2014. ♦

Regional Growth in Telework



State of the Commute Survey results indicate that teleworking in the region has experienced steady growth. Between 2010 and 2013, the region added 75,000 new teleworkers, for a total of 675,000 teleworkers.

CITIZENS COMMENT ON DRAFT PRIORITIES PLAN

More than 2,300 comments pertaining to regional transportation challenges were received by the TPB through an online public opinion survey and general public comment that was carried out as part of the development of a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, or RTPP.

Of the comments received, more than 1,800 came from a specific group of survey respondents who were asked to take the public opinion survey this past spring as part of a randomly selected representative sample of 660 residents of the region. The remaining comments were received from members of the general public and TPB stakeholders – members of the TPB, the TPB technical committee, and the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee – once the survey became open to the public on July 24. July 24 also marked the day that the draft Plan was released for a 30-day public comment period.

The TPB at its September 18 meeting received a briefing on three topics that arose from these comments. The

Board also discussed the next steps involved in moving towards finalization of the RTPP.

According to Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, the comments generally “reflect a good understanding of the information presented in the survey and in the draft document.” Kirby noted that an initial review of the comments received suggested three topics that need to be clarified or expanded upon in the revised version of the RTPP: tolling of existing highway lanes; the relationship between regional strategies and specific programs and projects; and the relationship between the RTPP and the TPB’s Constrained Long Range Plan, which serves as the TPB’s governing document for regionally significant transportation projects that are planned over the next 30 years.

Kirby said that TPB staff is currently analyzing all of the comments received and is planning to incorporate them into a revised version of the draft Plan, which the TPB will discuss in October. ♦

TPB RECEIVES UPDATE ON CONGESTION PRICING STUDY



On September 18, the TPB received a briefing on the final report outlining the public acceptability of congestion pricing in the region. The project was supported by a grant the TPB received through the FHWA Value Pricing Pilot Program. The TPB carried out the

research for the study in partnership with the Brookings Institution.

Despite the increased use of road pricing in our region and across the country, decision-makers and opinion leaders in metropolitan Washington often assume that citizens will oppose congestion pricing proposals, particularly those projects that would put tolls or fees on roads that are currently free of charge.

The study explored the opinions of regular citizens related to congestion pricing and whether more information and education about pricing could influence their attitudes. The study also sought to unravel key factors – issues like

fairness, effectiveness, or privacy – that make a pivotal difference in determining opinions. The study’s ultimate purpose was to help decision-makers better understand how they might attract public support for congestion pricing, if they were to decide to pursue such a policy solution.

The final report may be found online: www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/congestion_pricing/. ♦

UPCOMING OCTOBER AGENDA ITEMS

The October 16 TPB meeting is expected to include the following items:

- Briefing on the Draft Call for Projects and Schedule for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2014 CLRP and FY 2015-2020 TIP.
- Briefing on the Final Report of the TPB Bus On Shoulders (BOS) Task Force.
- Discussion of the Revised Draft TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP).
- Update on the Regional “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Campaign. ♦

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are at COG unless otherwise indicated. If you are in need of special assistance to participate in meetings, please call (202) 962-3315 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Bicycle racks are located in the parking garage at 777 North Capitol St., NE (Enter from First St., NE).

October 2013

- 2 Regional Taxicab Regulators Task Force (noon)
- 4 Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 Steering Committee (noon)
- 10 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 15 TDM Evaluation Group (noon)
- 16 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 24 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)
- 29 Safe Routes To School Regional Meeting (9 am)

November 2013

- 1 Technical Committee (9 am)
- 1 Steering Committee (noon)
- 13 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 14 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 14 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 19 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 19 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 26 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)

December 2013

- 6 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 6 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 12 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 17 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 17 Regional TDM Marketing Group (noon)
- 18 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

Dates and times subject to change.

Please visit our website at
www.mwcog.org
for up-to-date information.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Deb Kerson Bilek at (202) 962-3317, dbilek@mwcog.org, or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Please allow seven working days for preparation of material.

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