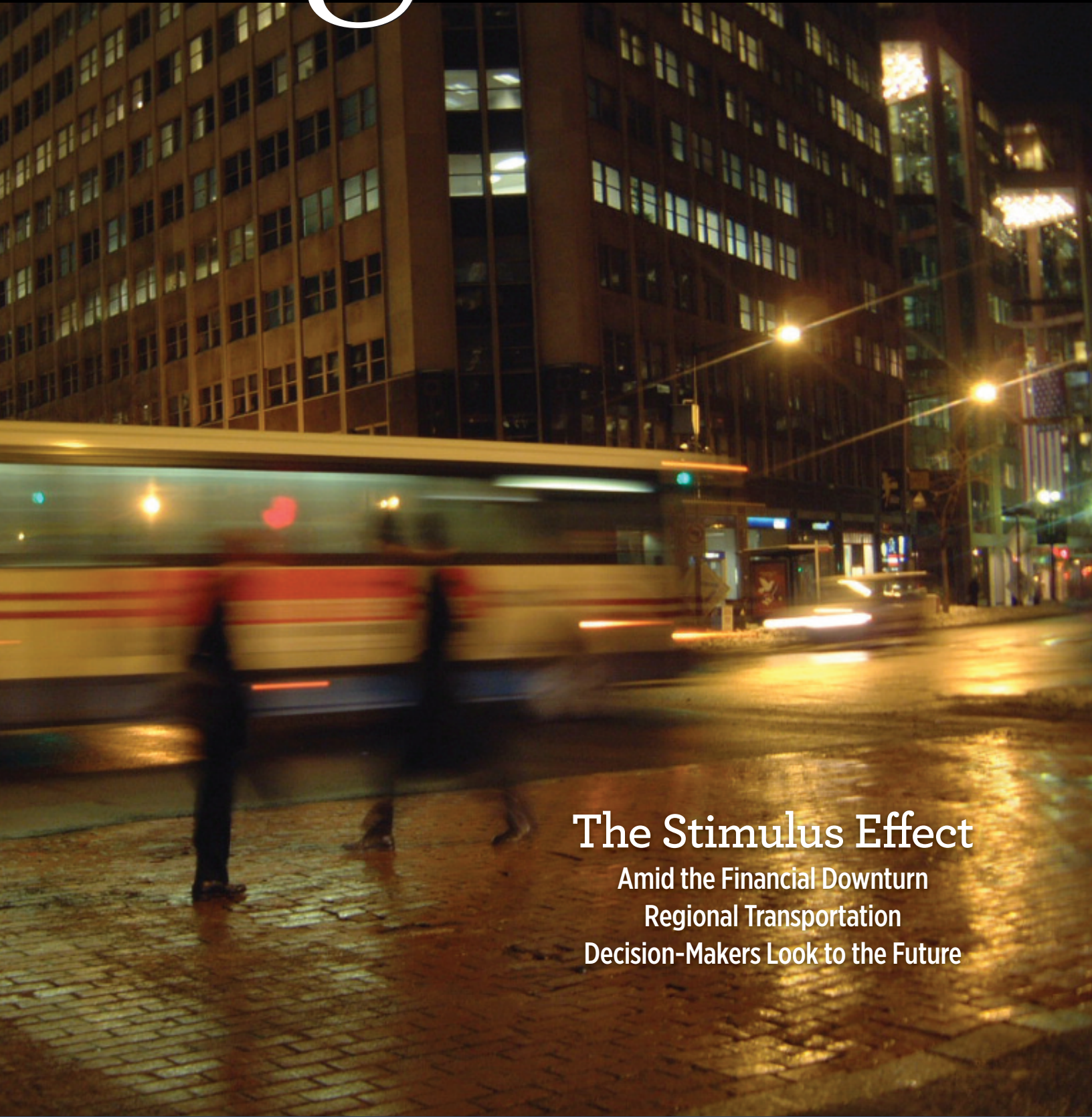


# The Region

VOLUME 49 2010

Annual Review of  
Transportation Issues  
in the Washington  
Metropolitan Region



**The Stimulus Effect**  
Amid the Financial Downturn  
Regional Transportation  
Decision-Makers Look to the Future

## What is the TPB?

Transportation planning at the regional level is coordinated in the Washington area by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia, and the District of Columbia, local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and nonvoting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies.

The TPB was created in 1965 by local and state governments in the Washington region to respond to a requirement of 1962 highway legislation for establishment of official Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in 1966, serving as COG's transportation policy committee. In consultation with its technical committee, the TPB is responsible for directing the continuing transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by the states and local communities in the region.

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# The Region 2010 **The Stimulus Effect**

**Amid the Financial Downturn, Regional Transportation Decision-Makers Look to the Future**

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# Finding Common Purpose



PHOTO BY EHPHEN, FLICKR.COM

## Charles Jenkins, 2009 TPB Chairman

Frederick, Maryland, my home county, may sometimes seem like it's on another planet, but every day we are being drawn more tightly into the orbit of Metropolitan Washington. On one hand, that means we have the opportunity to share in the benefits of a dynamic world-class economy. But it also burdens us with complex challenges that we cannot solve on our own. The pressures of growth are pushing hard on Frederick—just like so many other places in the metropolitan area—and along with that growth come numerous transportation challenges. The Transportation Planning Board at COG is a forum where leaders with diverse viewpoints—from DC to Frederick—have the opportunity to discuss and comprehensively address our inter-related transportation needs.



I am pleased that in 2009, I was the first representative of Frederick County to chair the TPB. Stepping up to this role certainly has benefits for my jurisdiction, but I also believe that it is useful for the rest of the region to build understanding and empathy for the transportation needs of places like Frederick. In order to be truly effective, programs with a broad regional scope—like emergency preparedness and incident response programs—must meet the concerns of outlying jurisdictions. In addition, more specific geographic challenges—like the unsolved capacity problems of Maryland's I-270 corridor—require cross-jurisdictional solutions. As you can see from this edition of *The Region*, the TPB is involved in a variety of programs that seek to meet local needs within a regional context.

In a year dominated by a national recession and local government budget shortfalls, it was more important than ever for us to work together, finding common purpose and seeking economies of scale. In the years ahead, I look forward to finding new avenues for building strong communities through regional collaboration.

PROJECT FUNDED BY THE  
American Recovery  
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Investment Act



USDOT  
**TIGER**

PUTTING AMERICA  
TO WORK

# Stimulus Funding Catalyzes Projects, Spurs Coordination

In a year when the transportation funding picture looked more dire than ever, there was one glimmer of hope, courtesy of the 2009 federal stimulus bill.

In a year when the transportation funding picture looked more dire than ever, there was one glimmer of hope courtesy of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), colloquially known as the “federal stimulus bill.” According to TPB estimates, the stimulus bill in 2009 provided Metropolitan Washington with more than \$800 million in transportation funding allocated via formulas and distributed through traditional funding channels.

In addition, the TPB was awarded nearly \$60 million in stimulus funding for improvements on a regional network of priority bus corridors and a transit center. This grant was awarded in February 2010 through a discretionary ARRA fund known as the TIGER (Transportation Improvements Generating Economic Recovery) Program, which is designed to foster innovation and

collaboration among various transportation modes and regional partners.

“This really is a victory for regionalism,” said 2010 TPB Chairman and Falls Church City Council Member Dave Snyder. “Every citizen in the region is going to benefit from this funding.”

## **Getting Money on the Streets—and on Buses, and Sidewalks, and...**

President Obama signed the ARRA package, totaling \$787 billion, on February 17, 2009. The stimulus bill contained more than \$45 billion for enhancements to the nation’s transportation infrastructure, including \$27.5 billion for highway infrastructure investment, \$8.4 billion for transit capital assistance, \$8 billion for high speed rail, \$1.5 billion for the TIGER competitive grant program and \$1.3 billion for Amtrak.

The TPB estimates that the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia departments of transportation will have spent \$123.5 million, \$167.2 million, and \$160.1 million, respectively, in stimulus funds in 2009. Another \$74.1 million is being spent on park roads in the Washington Region by the Eastern Federal Lands Division of the Federal Highway Administration, and \$52 million was sub-allocated to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for expenditure on its priority projects. In addition, ARRA allocated \$230 million in transit capital funding for the Washington Urbanized Area, with \$202 million going to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the remainder sub-allocated to other area transit providers. See page 13 for some examples of stimulus-funded projects in the region.

The infusion of federal transportation dollars came just as the full impact of the recession hit the Washington region. At a time when the region's transportation implementing agencies were preparing to delay or remove projects from the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), ARRA provided resources that were designed to make a quick economic impact. "Use it or lose it" time limits required that all unobligated funds would be forfeited after one year and redistributed to other states.

In order to get ARRA projects moving, the TPB approved a series of amendments to the region's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) between March and December 2009. All regionally

significant projects must be included in the TIP in order to receive federal funding. Many of these TIP amendments accelerated projects that were previously planned but lacked near-term funding.

The list of WMATA projects funded through ARRA includes \$40 million to replace its oldest buses and crumbling rail station platforms, and \$48 million to construct a rail-car inspection and testing building that would put new and rehabilitated cars in service more quickly. Projects funded by the state DOTs focused on rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, including road resurfacing and bridge maintenance projects.

The stimulus funds make a dent in the projected budgetary shortfalls of the region's transportation agencies, but the scale of the stimulus package is still far smaller than the overall regional need. WMATA, for example, recently identified a continuing shortfall of roughly \$3 billion over the next 10 years. The region's transportation needs continue to grow, and with this growth comes the need for increased funding.

### **TPB Scores TIGER Funds for Bus Priority Corridors**







The TPB scored a major success in February 2010 when it was notified that the region would receive \$58.8 million in discretionary stimulus funding through the TIGER (Transportation Improvements Generating Economic Recovery) Program. The funds will be used for a network of priority bus corridors and a transit center.

Nationwide, the TIGER Program provides



# Projects Funded Under the Region's TIGER Grant Award



- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | <b>Priority Arterial Corridors</b>             |    | <b>Express Bus on Bridges and Arterials</b> |
| 1   | 16th St. Downtown to Wheaton                   | 12  | Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, I-66 to K St     |
| 2   | Georgia Ave From Archives to Silver Spring     | 13  | 14th St Bridge, I-395 to K St               |
| <b>DC</b>   | 3 H St/Benning Rd, Minn. Ave to Franklin Sq.   |    | <b>Express Bus on Freeways</b>              |
| 4   | Wisconsin Ave, Naylor Rd to Friendship Heights | 14  | I-95/395, Pentagon to Dale City             |
| 5   | Addison Rd, Southern Ave to Addison Rd Station |    | <b>Transit Center</b>                       |
| 6   | University Blvd, Bethesda to College Park      | 15  | Takoma/Langley Transit Center               |
| <b>MD</b>   | 7 US 1, Laurel to Rhode Island Ave station     |    | Existing Metrorail                          |
| 8   | Viers Mill Rd, Shady Grove to Silver Spring    |  | Bus/Rail Transfers                          |
| 9   | US 1 Transitway, Potomac Yard                  |   |   |
| <b>VA</b>   | 10 VA 7, Alexandria to Tysons Corner           |   |   |
| 11  | Van Dorn-Pentagon, via Shirlington             |   |   |



\$1.5 billion in new multimodal discretionary grants administered through the U.S. Department of Transportation. Of more than 1,400 projects submitted nationwide for the TIGER Program, fewer than three percent were chosen for funding.

“Given the level of competition, we should really be pleased,” said 2010 TPB Chairman David Snyder who praised the intensive collaboration among board members, TPB staff, and the staffs of member governments, state departments of transportation, and area transit agencies in assembling the TIGER grant proposal. “This was a team effort that really paid off.”

The foundation of the TPB’s grant application was a network of connected bus priority corridors in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, running on both arterials and managed lanes on freeways (HOV and HOT lanes), as well as two bridge and arterial connections that tie the region together. These corridors represent areas with some of the highest levels of current bus ridership in the region, and are central to the efficiency, equity and sustainability of the region’s entire transportation system. Taken together, these priority bus corridors provide an efficient rapid bus system overlay that both supports the current bus and rail



The TPB application to the TIGER Program was designed to build upon the successful track record of the Washington region’s public transit network, consisting of the world-class Metrorail system complemented by commuter rail and by regional and local bus systems. Priority bus treatments offer ways to relieve pressure on the Metrorail system by making existing bus service running on existing infrastructure work better, move faster, and deliver more in terms of performance. Priority bus treatments include traffic signal prioritization, dedicated bus lanes, and real-time schedule information.

systems and increases regional accessibility through better use of the region’s existing infrastructure and operational assets.

The TPB’s TIGER grant proposal focused heavily on the concept of making the existing system work better, rather than implementing new transit services that could put unrealistic capital and operating burdens on cash-strapped public transit providers. As a result, the project will make efficient use of federal money to obtain greater value out of the existing transit system by creating capacity without requiring new operating expenditures.

## Takoma/Langley Transit Center



MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

The Takoma/Langley Transit Center, which will receive more than \$12.3 million under the TIGER grant, will improve safety and access to priority bus services, and will also serve the Purple Line light rail project.

Consistent with the requirements of the TIGER program, all awarded components of the TPB's project must be well on their way to completion by the end of 2012. More than \$26 million of the funding will go to improving bus transportation along priority corridors in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Improvements to these corridors include dedicated bus lanes, traffic signal priority, queue jump lanes, real-time passenger information, and enhanced bus stops, among others. Focusing on corridors with the highest regional ridership, these improvements are intended to increase ridership and reliability.

In addition, over \$19.9 million was awarded for multimodal improvements to enable priority bus transit to connect the District of Columbia with Alexandria, Fairfax County and Prince William County. The aim is to provide high quality transit options for commuters and to relieve pressure on the Metrorail system.

Finally, over \$12.3 million of the funding

will be used for the creation of a multimodal Takoma/Langley transit center in Prince George's County, which will improve safety and intermodal access to priority bus corridors. The center will also serve the planned Purple Line, a 16-mile inter-suburban light rail line connecting Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County in Suburban Maryland (see pages 18-22 for more on the Purple Line).

The anticipated impacts of these projects are far-reaching. The bus priority corridors improvements will decrease travel time and improve quality of bus service on approximately 250 bus lines throughout the region. This will provide benefit to more than 260,000 current daily riders, and more than 400,000 riders by 2030. Some of these riders will be former private auto riders who switched to the bus because of newly-found convenience and reliability. Ultimately, this project will result in air quality and climate change benefits, reduced

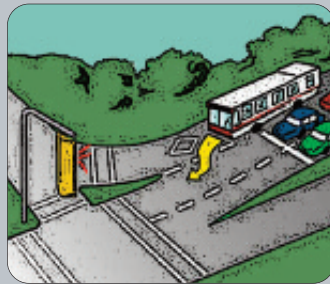
## Priority Bus Treatments

The TPB received TIGER funding for variety of systems that will make bus service more efficient and reliable.



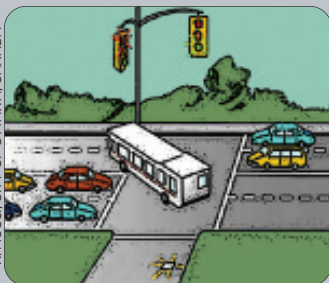
### Dedicated bus lanes

With their own lanes, buses will not get stuck in traffic.



### Queue jump lanes

A short bus-only lane at an intersection (resembling a turn lane) that allows buses to “jump the queue” at a red light. Queue jump lanes are often accompanied by transit signal priority.



### Transit signal priority

Detectors identify and distinguish buses from other vehicles, and manipulate traffic signals to give the buses green lights.



### Real-time bus information

A variety of methods, such as Metro’s Next Bus system, provide passengers with up-to-the-minute information on bus arrivals.

congestion and reduced accident costs, which will all contribute to improved livability and sustainability of the region.

In total, the TPB’s TIGER application requested \$204 million, a much higher amount than the final award. Two noteworthy components of the application, the K Street Transitway (total requested funding: \$76.4 million) and a regional bike-sharing program (total requested funding: \$13.4 million), were not awarded funding. However, many TPB members were optimistic that these projects will become a reality in the future.

## A Sign of Things to Come?

Perhaps more significant than the money itself was the way in which the stimulus package may represent a change in the way the U.S. Department of Transportation intends to do business. The TIGER program, in particular, may be a sign of things to come.

The ARRA legislation laid out general criteria for the TIGER program, indicating that projects awarded funding were expected to maximize job creation and economic benefit, have an impact at least at the metropolitan scale, and be completed or close to completion by February 17, 2012 (within three years of the passage of ARRA). In addition, application evaluation by the USDOT was mode-neutral, with the benefits of transit, highway and other projects compared on an equal basis. Proposals were also evaluated on environmental and quality-of-life elements, rather than solely on transportation-related benefits. This balanced approach to project selection represents a

## ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION AND FUNDING

As 2009 drew to a close, it was apparent that additional opportunities for regional collaboration and TPB leadership were just around the corner, taking the form of more federal grant prospects as well as emerging policy discussions. These federal funding opportunities provide examples of the growing symbiotic relationship between federal agencies and regional planning entities like the TPB.



### Livability Bus Program

In February 2010, the TPB submitted a proposal for a regional bus stop improvement program to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the new Livability Bus Program. The TPB's \$16.2 million proposal identified bus stop improvements in six of the TPB member jurisdictions, involving a total of 2,777 bus stops throughout the region. Types of improvements include accessibility enhancements, such as sidewalk extensions, curb cuts, and pedestrian ramps, as well as installation of energy-efficient lighting, bus shelters and real-time information at stops, such as NextBus displays.



### Value Pricing Pilot Program

In November 2009, the TPB, in partnership with the Brookings Institution, submitted a proposal to the Federal Highway Administration's Value Pricing Pilot (VPP) grant program to conduct a study on public attitudes toward road-use pricing. Distance-based road pricing has become more technologically feasible in recent years, but questions of public acceptability remain largely unanswered. The TPB's research project would investigate these concerns in a comprehensive and objective manner. Using the metropolitan Washington region as a case study, the project would employ focus groups and public opinion surveys to test a variety of pricing options and assess opportunities and obstacles to implementation.



### Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program

Another new opportunity from the federal level is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program. In the 2010 Budget, Congress provided a total of \$150 million to HUD for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase the capacity to improve land use and zoning. Of that total, approximately \$100 million will be available for regional integrated planning initiatives through HUD's Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program. TPB staff has begun working with other departments within the Council of Governments to develop a grant proposal for regional planning and visioning efforts.

change from previous individual mode evaluations at U.S.DOT.

A strong foundation of regional cooperation and consensus on the long-term direction of the region contributed to the TPB's TIGER success. More than ten years ago, the TPB adopted its Vision, a policy framework that

set forth far-reaching goals and strategies for reducing automobile dependency and increasing transit use, bicycling and walking. Stemming from the Vision was a regional study of transportation and land-use scenarios to see what would "move the needle" toward meeting the Vision goals.

Through these ongoing scenario planning activities, local governments came together regularly to tackle tough questions on how the region wanted to grow and what types of transportation investments would be needed and desirable. This effort produced an aspirations scenario that included an extensive network of high quality bus transit, new and priced road capacity, and compact, transit-oriented land use. Development of

bus network. The keynote speaker Roy Kienitz, U.S. DOT Under Secretary for Policy, expressed hope that the TIGER Program would be the first of many such grant opportunities, suggesting a possible new, multi-modal approach to funding transportation projects of regional or national significance.

The TIGER program transformed positive talk into real action. Given the possibility of further such funding opportunities through competitive federal grants that emphasize regional benefits, the TIGER experience sets a helpful precedent for future TPB leadership. “The biggest benefit of this process is

Given the possibility of further competitive federal grants that emphasize regional benefits, the TIGER experience sets a helpful precedent for future TPB leadership.

both the regional aspirations scenario and WMATA’s Priority Corridor Network (PCN), which identified the need for higher quality transit service in more than twenty high-volume bus corridors, created the backdrop for a regional discussion on how to cost-effectively expand the Washington area’s transit capacity.

To raise regional consciousness about priority bus services, the TPB sponsored a Regional Priority Bus Conference in June 2009. With 200 people in attendance, this conference provided support for the region’s transportation planning efforts by bringing together key stakeholders to learn about options for prioritizing bus transit and building consensus for a regional priority

that we have created a foundation to build upon,” said Chris Zimmerman, TPB member and Arlington County Board member.

The experience may come in handy quite soon. On April 26, 2010, the U.S. DOT announced it would soon be seeking proposals under a TIGER II program, which will offer a new \$600 million pot of competitive transportation grants. The new TIGER program is expected to be more explicitly linked to the Obama Administration’s sustainable communities initiatives, including grant making opportunities through the Department of the Housing and Urban Development. Grant winners for the TIGER II funds could be named as early as September 15.

# Stimulus Snapshots

A sampling of shovel-ready projects funded in 2009 with ARRA stimulus dollars.



DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Central Avenue (MD 214) Safety and Resurfacing Project, Maryland

**Total Cost: \$3.6 million**

The Central Avenue safety and resurfacing project in Prince George's County encompasses a two-mile stretch between Brightseat Road and Cindy Lane, on which around 59,000 vehicles drive every day. It includes ADA sidewalk upgrades, the installation of new countdown pedestrian signals at intersections, replacements of curbs, gutters and medians as well as new pavement markings. The Central Avenue corridor in Capitol Heights is of particular importance because it serves several stops along Metro's Blue Line.

## The Great Streets Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, D.C.

**Total Cost: \$30 million**  
**ARRA Funding: \$20 million**

This project in southeast Washington includes planned reduction of lanes, a new landscaped median and the completion of the sidewalk network on both sides of this roadway. It will not only improve the character of the street's neighborhoods, but more importantly provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment for residents and visitors to this area. The project covers 6.5 lane miles from 27th Street, SE to the Maryland border at Southern Avenue.

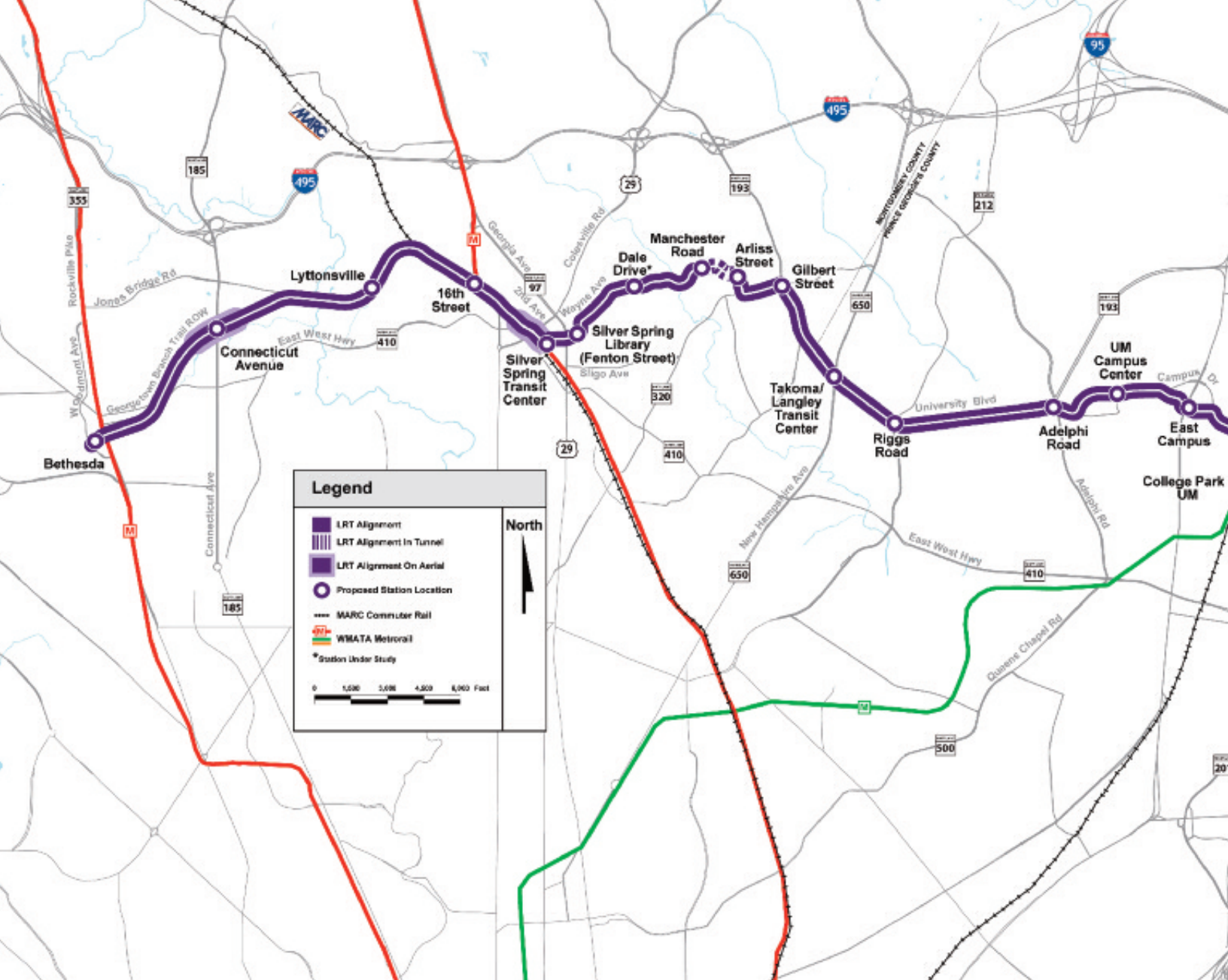


PHOTO BY MICHAEL WHITE, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

## Fairfax County Parkway Phases III & IV, Virginia

**Total ARRA Funds Associated with Project: \$48.8 million**

The Fairfax County Parkway will be completed to the extent originally envisioned more than 20 years ago. The project will aid access to the Fort Belvoir Engineer Proving Ground (EPG), a location that will be the home to a large percentage of the 12,900 jobs to be moved to the Fort as part of the latest round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). New interchanges will be built at the Franconia-Springfield parkway and at Boudinot Drive. Interchanges will be completed at the EPG access road and at Bolling Road. The Parkway project is the largest of the more than 60 projects in Virginia funded through ARRA.



# The Purple Line Picks Up

The region's first suburb-to-suburb rail transit line is scheduled to be rolling by the

# Speed

end of the decade.





MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

The Purple Line will feature 21 stations with connections to four Metrorail stations at Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton, as well as to MARC and Amtrak stations.

Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton, as well as to MARC and Amtrak stations. The project is currently expected to cost approximately \$1.5 billion and is scheduled to open in 2020. Governor Martin O'Malley announced in August 2009 that the state, after examining a variety of options (including a priority bus line), had determined that the locally preferred alternative for the Purple Line would be light rail.

At the TPB's October meeting, the board voted unanimously to include the Purple Line in the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Maryland intends to seek federal "New Starts" funding for the project through the Federal Transit Administration, but before doing so, the Purple Line needed to be included in the TPB's official planning documents.

"This vote essentially completes the process for the TPB on the Purple Line," said Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning at COG. "The Board's passage enables the state of Maryland to advance the project for federal funding."

In order to include a project in the CLRP, sponsors are required under federal law to

The Purple Line, a 16-mile light rail project between Bethesda and New Carrollton, took a major step toward implementation in October 2009 when the TPB voted to add the project to the region's long-range plan. The Purple Line will be the region's first suburb-to-suburb rail transit line, providing direct links between activity centers in Maryland without passing through the metropolitan core. It would also be one of the region's first light rail lines.

The Purple Line will feature 21 stations with connections to four Metrorail stations at



Capital Crescent Trail



Woodmont Plaza, Bethesda

demonstrate that project funding is reasonably anticipated to be available. The Maryland Department of Transportation’s financial plan for the Purple Line identified more than \$500 million by removing two road projects in the CLRP—MD 28/MD198 and MD 3 (the projects were downgraded from “construction” to “study” status). In addition, MDOT identified approximately \$500 million in previously untapped funding from a 2007 state legislative action that boosted funding in the state’s Transportation Trust Fund through an increase in the state’s sales tax and vehicle titling tax. Finally, MDOT’s financial plan noted that a successful Purple Line project would anticipate \$500 million in federal New Starts dollars.

Maryland State Delegate Bill Bronrott, a TPB member, urged support for the Purple Line in July 2009: “This is the most tangible action we can take that’s currently on the table, at least on our side of the river, to really do something about issues so many of us are concerned about—greening up the environment, greening up our power grid, greening up the economy.”

The Purple Line will be a pedestrian

friendly system projected to handle 64,800 boardings a day by 2030. The light rail line will largely run on the surface with one short tunnel section, one aerial section, and several underpasses and overpasses of busy roadways. It will operate mainly in dedicated or exclusive lanes, designed to make operations fast and reliable. The users of the Purple Line will generally access the line by foot, since it directly serves local communities, or by other transit services, particularly Metrorail and local bus services.

### Linking Suburb to Suburb

Many of the world’s great cities—London, Paris, Tokyo—have circle lines in their Metro systems. Here in the Washington region, planners, elected leaders and citizens have been talking for decades about a circle line—or at least a piece of one. As suburban employment has exploded in recent years, circumferential linkages from suburb to suburb seem to make even more sense.

The name “Purple Line” was coined in 1995, when Harry Weese Associates, the firm of Metro’s original architect, proposed a “Purple Circle Line” that would connect



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

University of Maryland, College Park

“high density residential neighborhoods” outside the Beltway with a heavy rail extension of Metro. Over the years, however, the term Purple Line has come to be associated with light rail inside the Beltway.

A 4.4-mile rail link between Bethesda and Silver Spring was a proto-Purple Line proposal that is, in fact, much older than the Purple Line label. In 1985, the CSX Railroad abandoned right-of-way for the Georgetown Branch line—a rail link that had originally run all the way from Silver Spring to Georgetown. Montgomery County bought the land in 1988 and launched a corridor study. In 1989, the county amended its Master Plan to include a trolley line on the Georgetown Branch alignment. In 1994, at the request of the Maryland Transit Administration, the 4.4-mile project was included in the TPB’s Constrained Long-Range Plan with a construction date of 2010. The completion date has been delayed a number of times.

In the late 1990s, the Bethesda-Silver Spring project was recognized as a component of a more ambitious project—by this time, commonly called the Purple Line—stretching 16 miles from Bethesda to

New Carrollton, the distance of the current project. But although this proposal captured a lot of public attention, it continued to move slowly through the planning process over the past decade, as political winds in the state shifted and funding constraints became increasingly tight.

The administration of Governor Martin O’Malley renewed the Purple Line momentum in recent years by launching an environmental impact study that concluded in 2009. When he announced his commitment to a light-rail alternative in August of 2009, O’Malley said the project “will create a lasting legacy by providing more transportation capacity in a way that protects and preserves existing communities. This east-west light rail line will connect with Metro and MARC in a way that will help reduce our dependence on cars by providing a reliable and environmentally friendly transit option to connect people with their places of employment, places of worship, and centers of economic development throughout the region.”

In recent years, the most vocal opposition to the Purple Line has come from neighborhood activists and other local



Silver Spring Library Site

leaders in Montgomery County who claim the project will be incompatible with the Crescent Branch Trail, which currently occupies approximately three miles of the project’s alignment east of Bethesda. Dozens of these activists spoke at TPB public comment periods in 2009, urging the board to reject the proposed project. In response, MDOT maintains that innovative design techniques will be used to allow the trail and the Purple Line to coexist in a community-friendly manner.

### A Purple Paradigm Shift?

If things go according to plan, ten years from now people will be able to get on a light rail train and travel east-west, from one Maryland suburb to another. The image of that future Purple Line ride is a powerful symbol, and it can be a tool to help us visualize a new transportation future for the region. Such a future would meet diverse needs with a diverse array of new transportation options—including light rail,

priority bus services and more opportunities for walking and bicycling. And these options would also support the development of vibrant communities where driving a car for every trip would become a choice, not a necessity.

“In voting today to put the Purple Line in the CLRP, you’re looking to the future, and future generations will thank you” said long-time Purple Line advocate Harry Sanders when he addressed the TPB in October 2009. Sanders, who died February 2010, was a former chair and long-time member of the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee and a vocal proponent of regional planning.

“Sometimes when we talk so much about the technical points, we forget why this is really important,” Sanders told the TPB. “The Purple Line is a long-term vision that will allow our children, our grandchildren, and their children to make the decision to live in transit-friendly, walkable neighborhoods that also have good job accessibility.”



JAKE BREWER

## Promoting Regional Coordination During Major Incidents and Events

Millions of people flocked to Washington on Inauguration Day 2009. By and large, the region's transportation network accommodated these needs amidst massive crowds without significant incidents. Assisting robust efforts from federal, state, regional and local agencies was a new program called the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program.

The Inauguration demonstrated significant promise for the MATOC Program as an active participant in regional event coordination. The Inauguration was the first major planned event during the trial phase of the MATOC Program, and provided a good opportunity to test MATOC procedures and activities. The goals for MATOC for the Inauguration were to maintain regional situational awareness of transportation incidents, to communicate incident information to the stakeholders in a timely, consistent, and reliable manner, and to ensure that traffic management actions were coordinated. The MATOC

Program tracked and made notifications on approximately 60 regional incidents in the latter half of 2009.

The MATOC Program facilitates communication by supporting cross-jurisdictional staff notifications, helping agencies make full-use of highway message signs, and providing early notification of incidents to the region's many traffic management and transit agencies. To support these activities, MATOC provides tools and processes for implementing successful, coordinated responses to traffic incidents. The end result provides reliable information to the public, enabling them to make timely and effective travel decisions. In addition to providing real-time coordination, MATOC also helps to develop strategies for dealing with potential future incidents.

Created following the experiences of the September 11, 2001 attacks, MATOC fosters partnerships among the region's major transportation agencies to reduce incident-related travel delays through improved coordination and information-

sharing. MATOC was established with the support of a \$1.6 million grant, initiated by U.S. Congressman Jim Moran, and provided in the 2005 SAFETEA-LU surface transportation authorizing legislation. The current federal grant funding will sustain the program only through mid-2010. After that date, MATOC will require \$1.2 million per year in order to maintain needed operations. The TPB is seeking funding commitments of \$400,000 from DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT to support the continuation of the MATOC Program.

Buddy Ey, then facilitator of the MATOC Program, noted that MATOC has served a key role in coordinating responses in the past, and this success has generated region-wide awareness. "I think that's part of what this program has brought—the awareness. Everybody working together. Forgetting the boundaries of the states or the District; that the National Capital Region is just one big location and whatever we would do in [one jurisdiction], let's do for the whole area." ■

## “What Would It Take?” Scenario Looks at Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Climate change is not a new issue, but since 2007, the TPB has been conducting new analysis to help the region act quickly and effectively to do something about climate change in the transportation sector. The “What Would It Take?” scenario was initiated to take on specific questions for the transportation sector. How far would we have to go in the transportation sector to meet regional climate change goals as adopted by COG in November 2008? What role will states and local governments play in reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? Will it be cost-effective to reduce emissions from transportation in this region? Is there “low-hanging fruit” that can be implemented now, or should the region focus on long-term strategies?

In order to answer these questions, the scenario (which will be completed in June of 2010) first constructed a baseline forecast for transportation-related GHG emissions in the region. The result was the realization that even with new federal fuel efficiency standards and renewable fuel standards,

additional major reductions would be necessary to meet the regional goals. After analyzing around fifty measures the results show that tackling this daunting requirement will require a bigger and possibly more aggressive set of strategies. It will also require a varied suite of actions at all levels of government, on both a short and long timeframe, and across different sources, ranging from vehicle fuel efficiency and alternative fuels to travel behavior and congestion. The study also found that early actions will be necessary to meet the more distant reduction targets. These early actions include some of the more cost-effective steps that can be readily implemented by state and local governments in the region, such as traffic signal optimization, telecommuting and cleaner transit vehicles.

The “What Would It Take?” scenario is just a first step by the TPB to address the issue of climate change and transportation. It includes analyses and near-term strategies to inform decision-makers, but also highlights many additional steps to be undertaken in the future. ■

Wheelchair accessible taxicabs were put into service in November 2009. Pictured, left to right: Bobby Coward, president of DC Adapt; Judy Heumann, Director, DC Department of Disability Services; DC Councilmember Muriel Bowser, chair of the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force; and David Sharp, president of Crossroads for Accessible Living.



## Wheelchair-Accessible Taxi Project Rolls Out in D.C.

Taxicab service in the Washington region is becoming accessible to people in wheelchairs thanks to a pilot program developed by the TPB. By the end of 2010, a fleet of 20 wheelchair-accessible minivan taxicabs will be in service in the District of Columbia. The Pilot project was funded through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Freedom Program, which provides funding for transportation programs and services that go above and beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Until the TPB implemented this pilot project, D.C. was one of the few major cities without wheelchair accessible taxi service.

The TPB is the region's designated recipient of funding from the New Freedom Program, as well as from the FTA's Job Access/Reverse Commute Program. The TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force makes grants from these programs

available on an annual basis through a competitive application process.

In 2008, the TPB awarded \$1 million in New Freedom funds for the pilot project which TPB staff coordinated and implemented. TPB staff oversaw the establishment of operating parameters for the pilot project such as draft taxi regulations, dispatch options and vehicle procurement. Two taxi companies for a pilot project were granted funds to start wheelchair-accessible taxicab service in the District of Columbia. The two companies, Yellow Paratransit and Liberty (Royal Cab), have worked closely with TPB staff and the D.C. Taxicab Commission to design the project and acquire the vehicles. Each company is receiving \$384,000 in New Freedom Funds for the purchase of 10 accessible cabs and for operating assistance. The D.C. Taxicab Commission provided each company with a partial match of \$100,000.

The TPB also approved funding and implemented two coordinated elements of the wheelchair accessible taxicab project: a centralized marketing campaign, including the development of a user guide, and driver training to ensure that drivers are comfortable providing the service and that customers receive consistent and reliable service.

In November 2009, the TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, chaired by TPB Vice Chair Muriel Bowser, held a demonstration showcasing the wheelchair-accessible taxicabs, which are fully compliant with the ADA. Local elected officials and members of the Task Force attended the event and participated in the demonstration. Four of these vehicles were put into service in December 2009, marking the first time mobility-impaired residents and visitors of the District of Columbia have had access to wheelchair-accessible cabs. ■

## Focusing on Freight

The Washington region is dependent upon efficient freight movement. With more people and jobs coming to the area all the time, and growing demand for goods and services, the role of goods movement in the transportation system is significant.

That reality is the impetus for a much more extensive treatment of freight issues in the region's transportation planning process. In July 2009, the TPB heard how its Freight Subcommittee plans to address freight movements and engage freight stakeholders in the region. The subcommittee, formed in April 2008, has been at work addressing these issues by engaging stakeholders, identifying freight bottlenecks, and taking an inventory of potential projects within the region that will have benefits for freight movement. Dealing with freight issues differs from traditional TPB activities in the degree to which private companies must be involved. Much of the subcommittee's effort so far has been aimed at engaging these private interests through the Focus On Freight e-newsletter and other outreach initiatives.

Much of the freight traffic using the region's surface transportation infrastructure is through traffic. In 2002, nearly 60 percent of the region's freight tonnage simply moved through, from an origin outside the region to a destination outside the region. In terms of freight value, that figure is

estimated to be 86 percent. By 2030, truck freight tonnage is expected to grow 106 percent compared to 2002, with rail freight tonnage growing 50 percent during that period. As these increases occur, the congestion impacts on the region's road and rail infrastructure are expected to increase significantly if no improvements are made.

Upgrades in rail infrastructure will be essential. In September, the TPB expressed support for the CSX Transportation Company's proposed National Gateway Initiative, which spans six states from the Mid-Atlantic to the Midwest and includes 61 rail clearance projects with 13 clearance projects in the National Capital Region. A double-stack-cleared rail network would significantly improve freight flow and has the potential to improve passenger train services in the National Capital Region.

There was little debate about the need to improve freight rail infrastructure in the National Capital Region. TPB members were concerned, however, that the CSX project sought support for a grant under the federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Program. Members also expressed concerns about the local impacts of the individual construction projects, the prospect of increased freight rail traffic through localities and the need



PHOTO BY PAIGE MILLER, FLICKR.COM

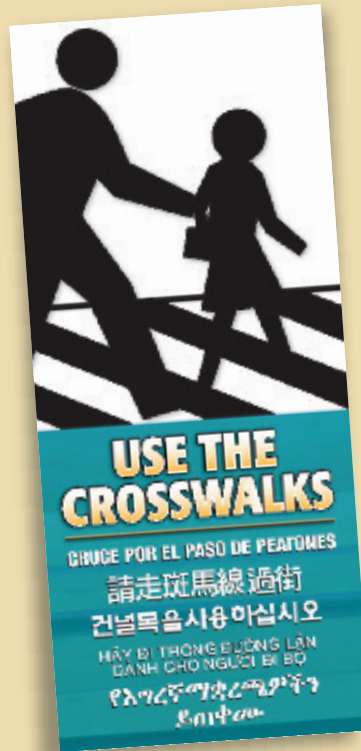


to work with the area passenger rail providers to prevent any adverse impacts to those services.

Despite these reservations, TPB members noted the potential benefits of the project, including shifting truck cargo to the rail system. CSX estimates that full implementation of the Initiative would shift 2.3 billion truck miles off of highways, and that the Initiative will result in more than \$1.5 billion in economic benefits to the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, including benefits from reductions in highway congestion and vehicle emissions.

Norfolk Southern is another Class One railroad that operates within our region, particularly in Virginia. The Norfolk Southern Crescent Corridor Intermodal Freight Program is an effort to link 13 states, over 2,500 miles between New Orleans and New Jersey, with track improvements and clearance projects to allow for double-stacked train service. In 2009, Norfolk Southern sought TPB support for this program, including support for a TIGER grant.

The TPB's final letters of support for CSX and Norfolk Southern recognized the benefits of their projects, with the caveat that the TPB had its own TIGER grant priorities for the region. In 2010, CSX and NS were both awarded around \$100 million in TIGER funds for projects located outside the National Capital Region. ■



The TPB's Street Smart campaign reaches out to non-English speaking communities.

## TPB Programs Promote the Needs of Diverse Populations

The TPB was honored in 2009 by the District of Columbia Chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) with the Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award for its initiatives that serve the transportation needs of the region's diverse populations. WTS, an international organization dedicated to the professional advancement of women in transportation, highlighted recent work by the TPB such as bringing wheelchair-accessible taxi service to the District of Columbia, conducting a review of MetroAccess, reaching out to the Hispanic community in pedestrian safety campaigns, and training community leaders and activists to get more engaged in the transportation planning process.

The TPB's initiatives serving diverse populations are many. The Access for All Advisory Committee advises the board on transportation issues, programs, policies and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. It has conducted a study of transit access for limited-English proficiency customers,



WMATA



Above: The TPB's Access for All Committee has focused attention on services for people with disabilities, including MetroAccess.

Below: Since 2007, the TPB's Community Leadership Institute has worked with a diverse spectrum of activists, including immigrant leaders and senior citizens.

**Diverse Populations, cont.**

worked with WMATA to implement some of the recommendations, and conducted a review of MetroAccess efforts to improve paratransit service.

The Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force was created by the TPB to oversee the development of the region's Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan and two federally-funded programs to help transportation-disadvantaged individuals gain access to transportation services. Over the past three years, the TPB has awarded over \$5 million for these projects, including the accessible taxicab project described on page 21.

The TPB's Community Leadership Institute has taught a diverse group of more than 100 community leaders and activists to be more engaged in transportation decision-making. It has focused on communities that are sometimes left out of the planning process, including immigrant communities and senior citizens.

Street Smart is a public outreach campaign that uses news and advertising media, as well as increased law enforcement activity, to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. Because studies show that Hispanics are significantly overrepresented in pedestrian crash statistics, Street Smart has aggressively reached out to the Hispanic community through Spanish-language advertisements and materials. ■

## Household Survey Identifies Changing Travel Patterns

Demographic shifts in the region, especially smaller household sizes, are fueling a number of changes in travel patterns, according to the TPB's 2007-2008 Household Travel Survey. For example, residents of the Washington region are making fewer daily trips per household and per person on average than they did in the mid-1990s, and national demographic shifts point to the trend continuing.

Of equal significance for the region's transportation planners is the finding that the share of daily trips by auto decreased by more than 2 percentage points region-wide between the time of the previous survey in 1994 and the latest 2007/08 survey. The walk and transit shares increased 1.6 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively, during that time. In addition, people who live outside the region's activity centers tend to make far more auto trips than residents of the activity centers, especially those living in inner-jurisdiction activity centers.

The TPB's Regional Household Travel Survey is based on a survey of over 10,000 households in the metropolitan Washington region. It examines the demographic, transportation and land use



factors that influence changes in daily travel by automobile, transit, walking and biking. The survey also compares daily travel patterns for households living within regional activity centers with households in other geographic areas.

The proportion of single-person households increased significantly in all but four jurisdictions—Arlington, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties, and the City of Alexandria—with the largest proportional increases in Loudoun and Prince William Counties, and the District of Columbia. Many of these single-person households are also found in the region’s activity centers in DC, Maryland, and Virginia, in areas such as downtown Washington, Crystal City, Rosslyn-Clarendon-Ballston, Bethesda, Silver Spring, Largo, Merrifield/Dunn Loring and Reston.

About one-half of the households in these activity centers are single person households, and these households are more apt to be occupied by persons in the 25 to 34 year old age group. Compared to 1994, persons in this age group also showed a significant shift from auto travel to travel by transit and walking. A full third of the

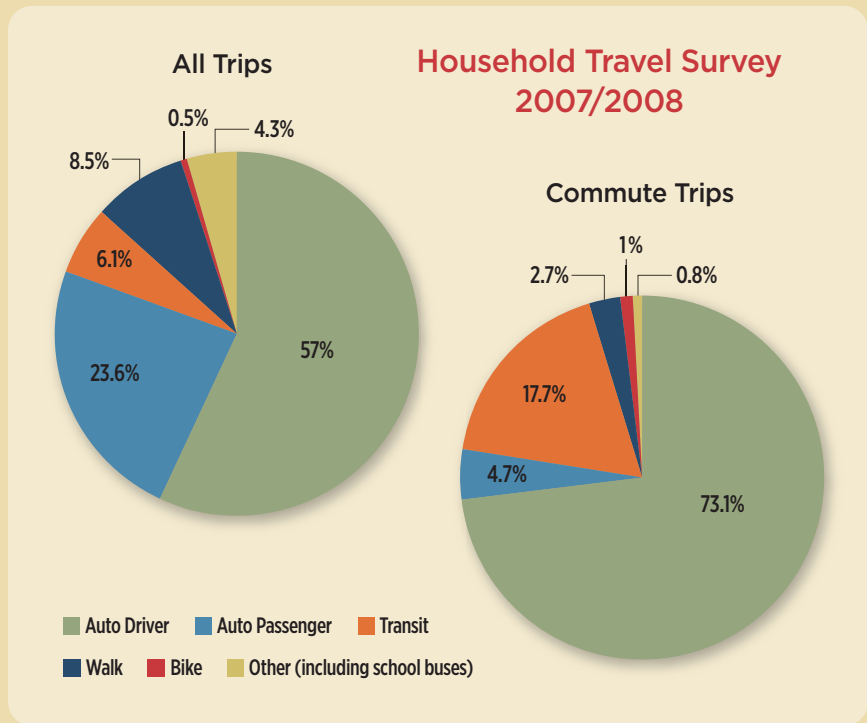
daily trips by members of this age group in the Washington region are made by non-auto means, or as an auto passenger rather than driver.

Bucking the overall regional trend toward fewer trips per person was the 65+ age group, in which daily trips increased 18 percent between 1994 and 2007/08. Although people 65 and over are taking more trips, these trips are less likely than those by younger adults to be taken during peak times.

In his presentation to the TPB,

Robert Griffiths of the Department of Transportation Planning noted that this finding runs counter to previous assumptions of transportation planners.

“Previously it had been assumed that the population 65 and over would be making fewer trips than they are today,” Griffiths said. “This proves that assumption wrong.” If this new trend continues as more “baby boomers” fall into this age bracket, it could have a significant effect on long-term transportation planning. ■



## Sharing the Road Safely is Street Smart

**T**In March 2010, ten-year-old “Bobby” was violently struck by a car traveling 40 miles per hour on a neighborhood street in Silver Spring. The impact almost certainly would have been fatal, but fortunately, Bobby was a wire-frame dummy, not one of the 270 actual child pedestrians killed nationwide in traffic crashes in 2008.

The region’s *Street Smart* safety campaign launched its spring 2010 campaign with this dramatic demonstration featuring a model of a child encountering a vehicle traveling toward him at speeds of 25, 35 and 40 mph. Placed in front of a designated stopping point, Bobby was safe in front of the vehicle traveling at 25 mph, but was not so fortunate with vehicles at higher speeds.

The realistic demonstration was meant to drive home the fact that speed is a major killer. In 2008, 13.7 percent of all traffic fatalities in the U.S. were pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrian fatalities account for one-quarter of all traffic deaths in metropolitan Washington.

The TPB’s *Street Smart* campaign, in its eighth year, is designed to educate drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Conducted twice a year, *Street Smart* uses advertising, public awareness efforts, mass media, and additional law enforcement.

The campaign, in concert with other safety measures, seems to be having an effect. From 2008 to 2009, Montgomery and Prince George’s counties experienced decreases in pedestrian fatalities of 22 and 41 percent, respectively. But other jurisdictions remained unchanged or experienced increases. This data reaffirms the need to continue efforts to improve safety. ■

## TLC Program Focuses on Commuter Rail Stations

**L**eaders in the region’s outer jurisdictions have increasingly realized that commuter rail stations are untapped assets that can become focal points for transit-oriented development (TOD). But because discussion about TOD has typically focused on Metrorail stations, it can sometimes be difficult for communities outside the Metro system’s reach to understand whether and how TOD principles might work for them.

The TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program has worked to fill that information gap. Since its inception in 2007, the program has funded 39 planning projects throughout the region, including TOD-related studies in Prince William, Loudoun, Charles and Frederick Counties, and the cities of Manassas Park and Frederick.

The MD 355/MD 85 corridor in Frederick County was the location for a TLC project in 2009 that identified strategies for enhancing TOD with short-term bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements and through long-term land-use recommendations. Frederick County’s draft comprehensive plan identified the corridor as the “county’s most significant opportunity for redevelopment”





Manassas Park used TLC technical assistance to develop a marketing plan for transit-oriented development near the city's VRE rail station.

because of its existing and proposed multi-modal transportation networks and because it is considered a gateway into Frederick City.

The study site is centered on the MARC commuter rail's Monocacy Station. Nearby are the Francis Scott Key Shopping Mall, a major retail center, and the Monocacy Civil War Battlefield. The study area is classically auto-oriented and generally unwelcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists. Parsons Brinckerhoff, the consultants that conducted the TLC project, analyzed the site by looking at traffic counts, observing travel patterns, hosting public workshops, and conducting public opinion polls on the internet and in-person at the mall.

The project report identified a host of potential short-term steps, including construction of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, recommended modifications in the county's existing mixed-use zoning regulations, and suggestions that the county consider the creation of a tax increment financing (TIF)

zone or a business improvement district. For the long-term, the report recommended road enhancements that would create a modified street grid more conducive to non-motorized transportation. It also recommended a new land-use pattern that would maximize attraction to the MARC station and the national battlefield site, and create locations for housing, which generally is not permitted under current zoning.

At the other end of the region, Manassas Park, Virginia is also looking to catalyze development near its commuter rail station. In 2009, the TLC Program funded the development of a Strategic Communications/Marketing Plan for TOD at Manassas Park's VRE Rail Station. The project consultants, Arup and PRR, performed an audit of existing conditions, conducted a workshop with key city staff and stakeholders and conducted interviews with a spectrum of developers and city decision makers. The consultants also performed benchmarking studies of other, similar suburban towns

that have successfully implemented TOD, including Palatine, Illinois and Canton, Massachusetts—near Chicago and Boston, respectively.

The resulting marketing plan incorporates strategies for business outreach, a public information program, marketing outreach and media/public relations. The recommendations also included place-making strategies, ranging from farmers markets to zoning enhancements. The final report prioritized activities that would provide the greatest impact with limited resources, and also provided budget and staffing estimates.

Frank Jones, Manassas Park's mayor, said the TLC report will be used to help tailor TOD strategies to a commuter rail station. "We want to create an expanded model of TOD," he said. "We've observed community development taking place around Metro stations, but not as much around VRE. We want to learn from past projects, but expand the scope from one or two block developments around transit stations to build a city core." ■

## Special “Days” Provide Reminders of Commuting Options



Over 6,200 residents of Metropolitan Washington participated in Car Free Day in September, a 14 percent increase in participation from 2008. This effort collectively reduced over 575,000 vehicle miles traveled. Car Free Day is an international event celebrated every year on September 22 in 1,000 cities in 40 countries. People are encouraged to get around without their car, highlighting transit, bicycling, walking and other alternative modes of transportation.

By challenging commuters, students and all residents to leave their cars behind, the event engages people in thinking about how their daily travel choice impacts their lives, their wallets and the environment. “Car Free Day is a great annual reminder that there are many ways to get to work that don’t involve driving by yourself every day,” said Nicholas Ramfos, director of Commuter Connections, a regional transportation network coordinated by the TPB.

Doing without a car for an entire day is not an option for many residents of the region. For this reason, sponsors of the event also encouraged residents to go “car-lite” by sharing a ride to

work or incorporating transit into some aspect of their commute.

As commuters consider giving up driving, bicycling can provide a transportation alternative. In May 2009, thousands of area commuters participated in Bike to Work Day, a celebration of bicycling as a clean, fun and healthy way to get to work. The annual event, organized by Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), caps off the national Bike to Work Week. Bike to Work Day brings together commuters in the metropolitan Washington area to promote bicycling to work as a healthy, environmentally-friendly, and cost-effective alternative to drive-alone commuting.

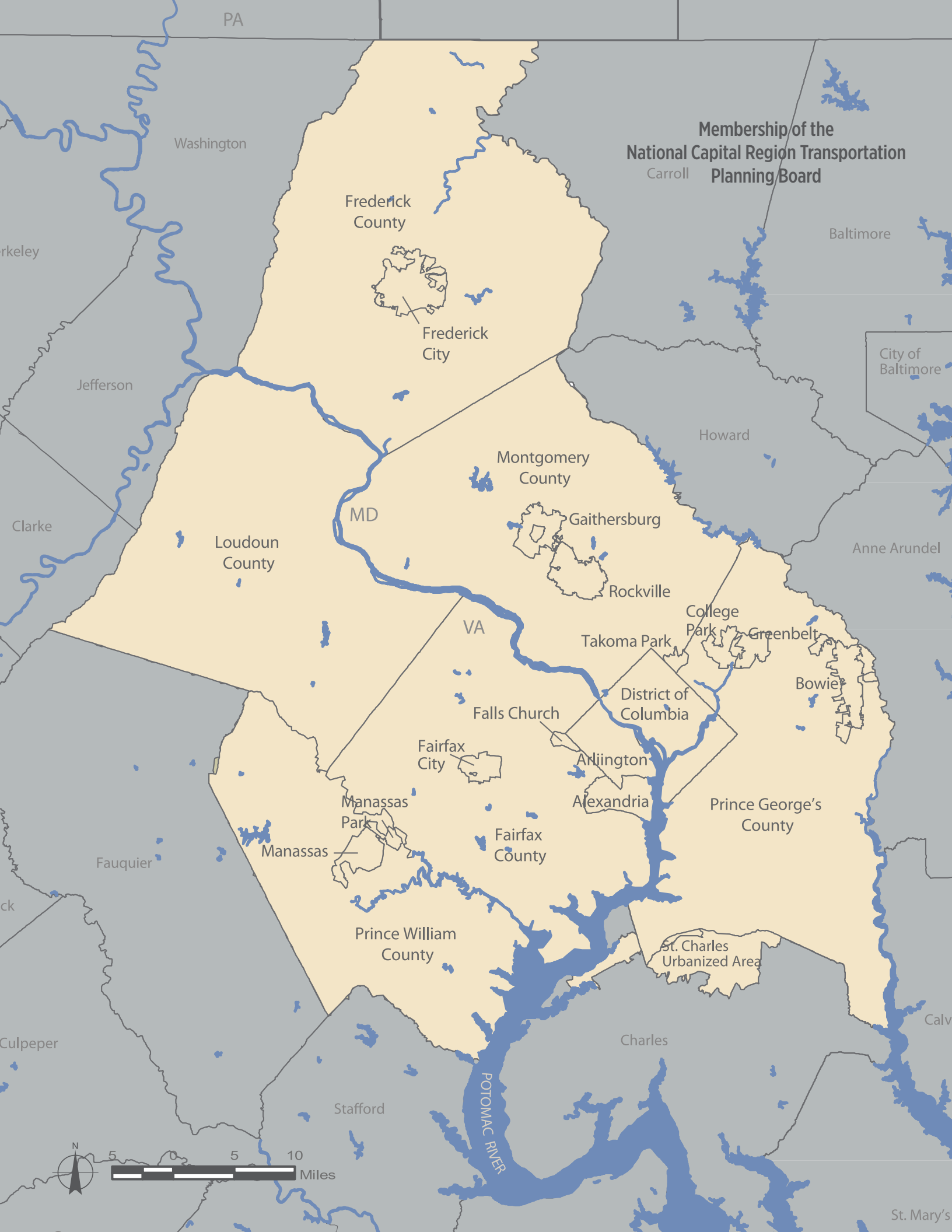
To help assist riders, Commuter Connections has launched a beta version of its online “Bike Path Finder,” which helps users determine the shortest and safest bicycle routes between their origin and destination. The Web site for the Path Finder is [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the TPB. Commuter Connections provides workers and residents with information on commuting options, so citizens can make a smart choice about how they travel to work. Commuter Connections also helps employers establish commuting benefits and assistance programs, including telework/telecommute programs, for their employees. ■



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

**Membership of the  
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