

Highlights of the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee Meeting Held on November 17, 2006

Jim Hogan chaired this meeting in Ms. Sutton's absence.

Item 1: Approval of the September 22, 2006 Meeting Highlights

The highlights were amended and approved to reflect changes to Item 2: Results of FY2006 Travel Forecasting Research. The updated version of the meeting highlights can be found on www.mwcog.org.

Item 2: Traffic Quality on the Metropolitan Washington Area Freeway System (Off-peak and Weekend Hours) Spring 2006, Draft Findings

Daivamani Sivasailam distributed a copy of his slides entitled "Off-Peak and Weekend Traffic Quality on the Metropolitan Washington Freeway System". He stated that the first off-peak and weekend survey was conducted in 1994. Subsequent surveys were done in 1997 and 2001. Off-peak hours were surveyed between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Weekend hours were surveyed between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm.

Mr. Sivasailam explained that the weekday off-peak continues to operate at acceptable levels of service even though lane miles under LOS C and D conditions have increased. During weekend hours there were more failing weekend locations and lane mile hours under LOS C, D, E and F conditions have increased. He stated that congestion has increased throughout the metropolitan Washington region. The beltway segment between Springfield interchange and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge improved most likely due to Woodrow Wilson Bridge construction warnings and advertisement for motorists to avoid the segment. Weekend LOS F conditions increased by tenfold, whereas LOS E conditions increased by 140 percent when compared with the 2001 survey.

The draft report will be finalized December 2006. The next off-peak and weekend survey will be conducted in 2011.

Questions and Comments

Mr. Jamei questioned whether the weekend hours were more congested than the weekday off peak hours. Mr. Sivasailam replied yes although this was not due to lane closures or construction. Weekend congestion is a recurring condition; however, I-95 in Virginia needs more analysis before making a conclusion. He referred to the practice of opening the HOV lanes to southbound traffic on Saturday and northbound on Sundays creating congestion in the opposite directions.

Mr. Snead asked if the Whitehurst Freeway was included in this study. Mr. Sivasailam stated that it was not included in the study due to obtaining flight waiver permission.

Item 3: Update on Household Travel Survey

Bob Griffiths distributed a hard copy of his presentation entitled "Household Travel Survey Pre-Test Results". He explained that the pilot test was conducted in order to try out new innovative strategies for the Household Travel Survey. Instead of using just the standard random digit dialing approach, an address-based sample was used to try and reach households without landlines, published phone numbers, or no phones at all. There was success in reaching many more of those households. A special focus study group further encouraged participation by offering a monetary incentive. This was also successful in gaining participation from households who do not normally participate in this type

of survey. Despite these successes, the overall mail out response rate was lower than expected. This problem is being remedied by special envelopes and more reminder postcards.

For those households successfully recruited, the real time geocoding of their destinations on their travel day was disappointing. We are working with the contractor to improve this process. The online retrieval of travel information also did not work as intended. We decided to forgo this option and are implementing an online scheduler for recruitment phone calls. The recruitment of GPS household was randomized and households were not given a choice to 'opt-in' to this part of the study. This did not adversely impact our completion rates and has given us information on the likelihood of missed trips by respondents. And finally, the non-response follow-up survey gathered important information about the households who did not respond to the initial survey. Overall the pilot test was successful and what we learned will contribute to an even more successful main survey.

The main survey will begin in January with interim deliveries in March 2007 through September 2007. The final delivery will be January 2008.

Questions and Comments

Mr. Moran questioned the low recruitment rate for the pilot test. Mr. Griffiths replied that the pilot test was conducted over a short period of time and he is not too concerned with the recruitment rate. Ms. Reschovsky added that slow postal deliveries also attributed to the low recruitment rate.

Mr. Foster asked if households east of the Anacostia River were included in the non-response follow-up survey in-person interviews. Ms. Reschovsky replied no; however, a sufficient number of households in the District of Columbia along the 16th Street NW corridor were interviewed.

The next TFS meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2007.

COG/TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee

Sign-In Sheet

Meeting of November 17, 2006

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