

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

June 9, 2011

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the May 18th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the May 18th TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the June 15th TPB agenda.

Attachments

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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June 9, 2011

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

SUBJECT: Applications Submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation: Transportation, Community, and Systems Preservation (TCSP) Competitive Grant Program

The TPB's Application

At its May 18 meeting, the TPB endorsed an application concept developed by TPB staff for submittal to the US DOT Transportation, Community, and Systems Preservation (TCSP) Program. The application, a copy of which is attached, requests \$160,000 in TCSP funding with a \$40,000 COG match for a total of \$200,000. The project will identify opportunities for promoting housing and employment development close to rail stations by enhancing walk and bike access to and from the stations through a "complete streets" approach. This approach will seek to moderate demand pressures on the transportation system by encouraging rail ridership in reverse-commute directions on trains that are currently operating with plenty of available capacity, or by selling the same seat twice in peak commute directions (where one group of commuters alights at a mixed-use suburban location and another group boards). The final product of the TCSP project will be an inventory of up to 25 rail stations with high promise for housing and employment development, and an accompanying list of high-impact transportation capital projects to improve access to these stations that could be quickly implemented should funding become available from the public or private sectors.

Applications Submitted by other Agencies

Several other agencies in the Washington region submitted applications for TCSP funding:

- Prince George's County: "Prince George's County Green Roads Program – Ager Road"
\$5 million (\$4 million in TCSP funding, \$1 million from Prince George's County funds)
- Arlington County: "Multimodal Improvements to Army Navy Drive"
\$6 million (\$4.8 million in TCSP funding, \$300,000 from FHWA design work already completed, \$900,000 from Arlington County capital improvement program)
- Fairfax County: "Tysons Corner Neighborhood Access Improvements"
\$9.71 million (\$1 million in TCSP funding, \$8.71 million from Federal CMAQ funds, Virginia State CMAQ Matching funds, Fairfax County Local funds)
- District of Columbia Department of Transportation: "Multi-Modal Transportation Corridor Study"
\$1.5 million (\$1.2 million in TCSP funding, \$300,000 from DDOT funding)
- District of Columbia Department of Transportation: "Intersection Reconstruction of East Capitol Street and Benning Road"
\$6.5 million (\$5.2 million in TCSP funding, \$1.3 million from DDOT funding)

Attachment: TPB TCSP Application

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

One Region Moving Forward

June 3, 2011

District of Columbia
Bladensburg*
Bowie
College Park
Frederick
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Loudoun County
Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County

*Adjunct Member

Christopher Lawson
Federal Highway Administration
D.C. Division Office
1990 K Street, NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006-1103

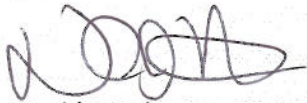
Dear Mr. Lawson:

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCog) is pleased to submit the attached application for grant funding under the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This application is being submitted on behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, which will serve as the lead agency for this application.

The proposed project in this application is to develop an inventory of high-impact complete streets multimodal transportation improvements that will improve access to and from regional rail stations to promote employment and housing development close to stations with untapped potential. The project will seek to moderate demand pressures on the transportation system by encouraging rail ridership in reverse-commute directions on trains that are currently operating with plenty of available capacity. The TPB endorsed the project concept at its meeting on May 18, 2011.

Should you or your staff have any questions regarding our application, please contact Ronald Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning, at (202) 962-3310 or by e-mail at rkirby@mwkog.org.

Sincerely,



David J. Robertson
Executive Director

Attachment: Grant Application

777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002
202.962.3200 (Phone) 202.962.3201 (Fax) 202.962.3213 (TDD)

www.mwcog.org



June 2, 2011

Chairwoman Muriel Bowser
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairwoman Bowser,

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is pleased to submit this letter of support to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's application for Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program grant funds.

The purpose of the project is to identify challenges that commuters face in walking or bicycling to rail stations in the region, and opportunities for improvement. WMATA actively promotes walking and biking as a way for customers to access the transit system. In fact, this past February, WMATA's Board of Director's adopted goals for the agency aimed at increasing the number of patrons who arrive at Metrorail stations by walking or bicycling.

Improving bicycle and pedestrian access to Metro stations provides lower income citizens in the Washington region with an inexpensive and on-demand way to complete a trip that otherwise might cost them more in time and/or money. WMATA also recognizes the many other benefits that walking and bicycling offers in terms of physical health, decreased air emissions and motorized vehicle congestion, and cost-effectiveness as a mode of station access.

We believe this project can make a significant contribution to the quality of life in our region and look forward to participating in its implementation.

Sincerely,

Nat Bottigheimer
Assistant General Manager
Department of Planning & Joint Development

**Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority**

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/962-1234

By Metrorail:
Judiciary Square—Red Line
Gallery Place-Chinatown—
Red, Green and
Yellow Lines

By Metrobus:
Routes D1, D3, D6, P6,
70, 71, 80, X2

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Office of the Director

June 3, 2011

Victor M. Mendez

Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Mendez:

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) is pleased to submit this letter of support for the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's application for Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program funds.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, is seeking TCSP funding to promote employment and housing development close to rail stations by identifying small-scale multimodal transportation improvements which will improve walk and bike access to and from the stations using a "complete streets" approach.

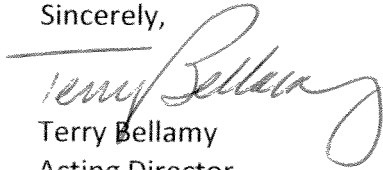
DDOT is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital through more sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. Central to this vision is improving energy efficiency and modern mobility by providing next generation alternatives to single occupancy driving in the city. The TPB's proposal will provide opportunities to create enhanced access to Metrorail facilities in the District, giving residents and commuters greater flexibility when choosing transit and alternatives to single occupant vehicles.

DDOT is taking up the challenge to implement livability practices in day to day operations and making it a goal to translate that idea into actual actions. Outcomes will be aimed at on the ground changes such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, more accessible bus stops, geometric adjustments that support intersection safety, increased green spaces, attractive streetscapes, signage for better driver information, updates to traffic signal timing, and speed controls in sensitive areas. DDOT will be better positioned to address livability principles through an

inventory of small-scale, high-impact transportation capital improvements developed through the TCSP grant.

We believe the product of the TPB's proposal can make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the District and look forward to participating in its implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Bellamy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.

Terry Bellamy
Acting Director

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP)**PROGRAM FY 2011 GRANT APPLICATION****PART A. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project Title:	High-Impact Complete Streets Access Improvements for Rail Station Areas in the Washington Region
Project Location (Include City/County, State):	Rail station areas in the Washington Region (District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia)
State Priority (to be completed by State DOT):	
GRANTEE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Grantee Contact Name:	Ronald F. Kirby, Director
Agency/Tribal Government:	National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (MPO for the Washington Region)
Mailing Address (Street/P.O. Box):	MWCOG 777 North Capitol St., NE Suite 300
City, State, Zip code:	Washington, DC 20002
Phone:	(202) 962-3310
Fax:	(202) 962-3202
E-Mail:	rkirby@mwkog.org
STATE DOT CONTACT INFORMATION	
State Contact Person:	Jim Sebastian (DDOT)
Phone:	(202) 671-2331

Fax:	(202) 671-0617
E-Mail:	jim.sebastian@dc.gov
FHWA DIVISION OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Division Contact Person:	Sandra Jackson / Ivan Rucker
Phone:	(202) 219-3521 / (804) 775-3336
Fax:	(202) 219-3545
E-Mail:	sandra.jackson@dot.gov , ivan.rucker@dot.gov
CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION	
Congress Member:	Eleanor Holmes Norton
Congressional District No.:	District of Columbia At-Large
Congress Member:	Donna Edwards
Congressional District No.:	Maryland District 4
Congress Member:	Chris Van Hollen
Congressional District No.:	Maryland District 8
Congress Member:	Steny Hoyer
Congressional District No.:	Maryland District 5
Congress Member:	Roscoe Bartlett
Congressional District No.:	Maryland District 6
Congress Member:	James Moran
Congressional District No.:	Virginia District 8
Congress Member:	Gerald Connolly
Congressional District No.:	Virginia District 11
Congress Member:	Frank Wolf
Congressional District No.:	Virginia District 10
Congress Member:	Robert Wittman
Congressional District No.:	Virginia District 1
TCSP Program Funds:	\$160,000.00
Matching Funds/In-kind Services Value:	\$40,000.00
Matching Funds/In-kind Services Source:	MWCOG Membership Contributions
Total TCSP-Related Project Costs:	\$200,000.00

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE FHWA DIVISION OFFICE				
State Administered?		Yes		No
Division Administered?		Yes		No
“Transfer” TCSP funding for Project Administration?		Yes		No
If yes, which Federal Agency				
Will the project be obligated by September 30, 2011?		Yes		No
Date grant application approved by FHWA Division Office				

Part B. Project Abstract

The Washington region has over 100 rail stations with varying levels of development, including inner core stations surrounded by high density mixed use development, suburban commuter rail stations with nearby housing, and underutilized station areas with significant potential for both housing and employment development. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region is seeking TCSP funding to identify opportunities for promoting housing and employment development close to rail by providing walk or bike access to and from the stations using a complete streets approach. The project will seek to moderate demand pressures on the transportation system by encouraging rail ridership in reverse-commute directions on trains that are currently operating with plenty of available capacity, or by selling the same seat twice in peak commute directions (where one group of commuters alights at a mixed-use suburban location and another group boards). The final product of the TCSP project will be an inventory of up to 25 rail stations with high promise for housing and employment development, and an accompanying list of high-impact transportation capital projects to improve access to these stations that could be quickly implemented should funding become available from the public or private sectors.

Part C. Project Narrative

The 126 rail station areas in the National Capital Region are critical regional assets. The TPB’s scenario planning over the last decade has emphasized the value of promoting development closer to transit station areas, locating jobs and housing closer together, and improving multimodal transportation options. The TPB has also found that local, often small-scale, actions are necessary to make these principles truly come to life. The TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program was established in 2006 to help

jurisdictions plan small improvements – such as pedestrian facilities, safety and access improvements, or multimodal concepts for intersections or streets – to make activity centers function more effectively as vibrant, mixed-use places. Many of the planning efforts completed under the TLC Program have suggested capital improvements that would further the ability of all modes to support dense areas with both jobs and housing. However, the TLC Program has not had the resources to conduct a comprehensive study of all of the region’s rail station areas to identify opportunities for access improvements that could support additional development.

The TPB is seeking \$200,000 in TCSP funding to develop a list of small-scale, multimodal transportation projects, such as pedestrian/bicycle or other complete streets improvements, around rail stations with underutilized transit capacity. This inventory of improvements will provide local planners, local and state departments of transportation, and developers with a “go-to” list of small-scale, low-cost, high-impact transportation improvements that jurisdictions may reference when working with developers, preparing grant applications, or allocating local funding with the ultimate goal of increasing rail connectivity within the Washington region.

The TCSP project will build on previous planning efforts, particularly the “Metrorail Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Improvements Study,” which the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) recently concluded. That study identified strategies to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity in and around Metrorail stations. It also provides recommendations for a range of physical infrastructure improvements, as well as policies and programs to encourage multi-modal trips. The TPB will work in close partnership with WMATA during the implementation of this TCSP project.

The project will serve a variety of regional goals that are grounded in the *TPB Vision*, the region’s transportation policy framework, and recently reaffirmed in MWCOG’s *Region Forward* comprehensive policy plan. These goals include reducing auto dependency, supporting multi-modal travel options, and promoting the development of employment centers and housing in locations already served by transit. In particular, the project will seek to relieve demand pressures on the transportation system by encouraging rail ridership in reverse-commute directions on trains that are currently operating with plenty of available capacity, or by selling the same seat twice in peak commute directions (where one group of commuters alights at a mixed-use suburban location and another group boards).

Looking beyond transportation measures, this project will support and encourage a more balanced allocation of job and household growth that will benefit the entire region in numerous other ways – for example, by promoting robust economic development in all jurisdictions, inner and outer, east and west. The project will also emphasize the need to provide access for people of all income levels. The findings in a recent Brookings study “Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America,” which measured the effectiveness of transit in helping workers reach jobs within their regions, demonstrates

that it is not sufficient to have significant regional transit coverage. In order for the transit system to be effective, the transit network must provide connections to jobs for a population with varying levels of job skills.

Work Scope Elements

The project will include the following components:

1. **Conduct employment and household analysis for rail station areas** – The project will conduct an analysis of employment and housing opportunities for each Metrorail and commuter rail station area in the National Capital Region. The data will provide a breakdown of the varying skill levels of jobs within a half-mile of each station, household income levels of workers who can fill jobs in targeted growth areas, and review and consideration of environmental justice and other equity issues.
2. **Identify rail capacity** – For each rail station area, the project will identify where there is capacity on trains during peak commute times. The regional analysis will review projected rail capacity figures and indicate where capacity exists on the region's rail systems, including off-peak reverse commute opportunities and opportunities to "sell the same seat twice" in the peak.
3. **Identify up to 25 most opportune locations** – Drawing from the entire list of regional rail stations, the study will identify station areas that present the greatest opportunities to support housing and employment development which can take advantage of existing rail capacity. The identification of these locations will be based upon: a) the regional technical analysis conducted under steps 1 & 2 above, and b) input from the TPB's member jurisdictions.
4. **Identify high-impact complete streets accessibility opportunities in the most opportune locations** – For each opportune location, the project will identify challenges that commuters face in walking or bicycling from rail stations to their jobs or from their homes to rail stations, and opportunities for improvement. Many rail station areas around the region have been studied extensively and already have a list of capital improvements for access improvement. For those opportune areas that have not yet undergone this level of analysis, this project will conduct that analysis. Area plans and development proposals for each location will be reviewed to assess how local jurisdictions are planning to address these challenges. The project will also identify regional success stories in creating public-private partnerships to implement accessibility improvements.
5. **Develop a regional inventory of projects** – The final product will comprise a list of small, high-impact capital projects that would improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation around the opportune rail station areas throughout the region, taking advantage of existing rail infrastructure. The recommended improvements will also be presented in station area,

jurisdiction and regional maps. Among other things, this product will provide a resource for future funding opportunities, including private investment and federal, state, and local public funding.

Part D. Project Eligibility

The TPB's TCSP proposal to identify High-Impact Access Improvements for Opportune Rail Station Areas in the Washington Region falls within the purview of Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code. The inventory developed through the proposal would promote safer access to regional rail stations, leading to more efficient use of the existing transportation infrastructure. Not only will the product serve the mobility needs of residents, but it will support economic development around underutilized rail stations, thus minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution.

Amount of Federal TCSP Funds Requested - Indicate the total cost of the proposed work along with the amount of TCSP funds being requested (the maximum Federal share for this program is 80 percent).

The TPB's proposal will cost a total of \$200,000. The TPB is requesting \$160,000 in TCSP funding for this project concept.

Commitment of Other Funds - Indicate the amounts and sources of any private or other public funding being provided as part of this project. Only indicate those amounts of funding that are firm and documented commitments from the entity controlling the funds.

\$40,000 will be provided from the MWCOG local membership contributions. These dues are collected annually from COG member jurisdictions based on population.

Previous TCSP Funding - Indicate the amount and Federal fiscal year of any previous TCSP funds received for this project.

The TPB received a TCSP funding grant for \$380,000 in FY 1999. The project was to implement the adopted transportation vision for Metropolitan Washington by developing circulation systems and green space. The total project budget was \$480,000.

Project Administration - Indicate whether the project is being administered by the State transportation department, an Indian tribe, or a county, or other local jurisdiction.

The project will be implemented by the TPB. Project implementation will occur through the structure of the TPB's Transportation/Land-Use Connections Program, which has an established administrative system and staffing plan, including over 30 pre-qualified consultants specializing in multimodal transportation and planning specialties.

TPB member agencies will be included in the project process and will be asked to provide insight at several points in the process, including the development of the list of opportune rail station areas. Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the State of Maryland, Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia; local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, National Park Service, and other federal agencies. Many of the state, regional, and local governments and agencies directly involved in decision-making for these systems are already represented on the TPB.

Through the TCSP project effort, the TPB will work closely with WMATA and complement the work completed under the "Metrorail Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Improvements Study."

Project Schedule - The anticipated project schedule (assuming the requested TCSP funding is provided) is required.

It is anticipated that work on the project would commence in September 2011 and that the project would be completed within one year.

Work Scope Elements:

1. Conduct employment and household analysis for rail station areas (months 1-2)
2. Identify rail capacity (month 3)
3. Identify up to 25 most opportune locations (month 4)
4. Identify high-impact complete streets accessibility opportunities in the most opportune locations (months 5-8)
5. Develop a regional inventory of projects (months 9-10)

It is anticipated that work scope elements one through three would be completed by COG/TPB staff and that the services of a consultant would be procured for elements four and five. Based on this schedule, a presentation of results to the TPB likely would occur in September 2012.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3315 Fax: (202) 962-3202

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Eric Randall
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: TPB Bus Supportive Activities

DATE: June 9, 2011

Background

At the April 20 and May 18, 2011 Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meetings, several questions were asked about the various TPB activities supporting bus transit. This memorandum provides additional information and more fully explains the purposes and processes of the activities taking place.

TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee

The Regional Bus Subcommittee (RBS) was formed by resolution of the TPB in January 2007 and is the primary means for engaging regional bus transit providers in the regional transportation planning process. Its mission is to provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the long-range transportation plan. Participation is encouraged from all member jurisdictions of the TPB to support the planning processes and activities related to public transportation in the National Capital Region. Participating subcommittee members are transit planners from the local, state, and regional agencies. In 2008, the RBS prepared its first list of regional priorities for bus providers, which informed the publication of the *Moving Forward: Status of the Bus Systems of the National Capital Region* brochure. This year, the RBS is conducting updates of these activities.

2011 Regional Priorities for Bus Services

The presentation to the TPB on May 18 provided an overview of the priority areas of interest for bus providers from across the region, based on inputs from the TPB's Regional Bus Subcommittee using the same process as in the preparation of the 2008 list of priorities. Since 2008, many bus providers have experienced reductions in service and/or are facing such in the near term due to financial constraints. For the 2011 list of priorities, members of the RBS focused on eight shared regional themes for longer-term, strategic consideration. Specific projects were identified as examples of the themes, such as the need for more bus garage facilities throughout the region and specific projects to adapt to the upcoming BRAC developments. Other regional themes were more broad, such as the need for greater focus on customer needs and markets, or conceptual in nature when detailed information is lacking, such as the need expressed by commuter bus providers for a DC Downtown Bus Center.

For the 2011 priority list, inputs containing specific project proposals were received from eleven bus providers. These are described in a twenty-nine page appendix available on the RBS's website: http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/committee/default.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=215 . Copies of this appendix will be available at the June 15 TPB meeting.

Over the next six months, the RBS will be developing the update to the *Moving Forward* brochure, which will provide an overview of bus service and plans across the region for public information and citizen outreach efforts.

Bus Priority Treatment Guidelines

The purpose of this technical document is to assist traffic engineers and bus operators in evaluating possible applications of bus priority treatments at the street and intersection level, including implementation of the TPB's TIGER Grant's projects for transit signal priority and queue jumps. The guidelines provide an overview of the suitability, criteria, and impacts and benefits of various types of bus priority treatments for use in further analysis at the corridor, roadway segment and intersection levels.

The 102-page guidelines document has been completed and printed copies will be distributed to the technical staff of each jurisdiction. In addition, the consultants who prepared the guidelines will be hosting a webinar in late June to review the guidelines with the traffic engineers and transit planners consulted in their preparation. Color Xerox copies of the guidelines will be available at the June 15 TPB meeting. The document is available electronically on the COG website under Publications>Transportation>Technical Reports. http://www.mwcog.org/publications/departamental.asp?CLASSIFICATION_ID=3&SUBCLASSIFICATION_ID=25.

Multi-Modal Coordination for Bus Priority Hot Spots

This study, which was approved as part of the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in March, will begin in July 2011. Funded by Technical Assistance monies from WMATA, MDOT, DDOT and VDOT, the study will be the next step in implementing the 20 year vision for surface transit enhancements set forth in the 2009 Priority Corridor Network (PCN) Running-way Evaluation Study. Near term implementation is aimed at identifying opportunities for running-way improvements that could increase average bus speed and on-time performance on selected segments of the long range PCN vision. These "hot spots" are specific intersections or segments in which modest investments in bus priority improvements could significantly improve bus operations and reduce jurisdictional operating subsidies. WMATA conducted an initial identification and prioritization of hot spots on the Metrobus network; however, jurisdictional transit information (e.g., ART, DASH, Ride On, etc.) was not included in this original analysis.

Consultant expertise will be used to collect local information and develop a regional Top 10 list of hot spots for each of the three states for near-term implementation of the types of bus runningway improvements outlined in the Bus Priority Treatment Guidelines. Preliminary design of bus priority treatments will be conducted for identified "hot spot" locations, establishing feasibility and developing projected capital costs, operating savings, and customer benefits.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3315 Fax: (202) 962-3202

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Robert Werth
Chair, TPB Private Providers Task Force
President, Diamond Transportation Services, Inc.

SUBJECT: TPB Annual Transit Forum Overview

DATE: June 8, 2011

The 22nd Annual Transit Forum was held on May 24, 2011. The purpose of the annual transit forum is to bring together representatives from the private transportation sector and local jurisdictions to discuss mutual regional transportation interests. Over 40 persons attended, including representatives from local jurisdictions, public bus operators, and fourteen private transportation providers or manufacturers. The agenda featured three main items: a keynote address, an update on the TPB's activities, and then a roundtable discussion among the attendees.

This year's keynote address was given by Mr. Dennis Cannon who discussed the issue of the growing size of mobility devices and implications for transit and taxi vehicles. Mr. Cannon served as key staff to the US Access Board from 1981 to 2010 and developed ADA accessibility guidelines for vehicles, the public right-of-way, and electronic and information technology standards. In his address, Mr. Cannon discussed the revised guidelines on making vehicles ADA accessible which are expected to be issued soon by the Access Board, and will then be taken up by USDOT through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. He emphasized that the guidelines can only apply to vehicles and what type of mobility devices they should make allowances for, not to the design of the mobility devices themselves, and that the original guidelines are out of date given current mobility device size, weight, number of wheels, turning radius, and other factors. An intensive question-and-answer period followed, with much discussion of how transportation providers can best meet the needs of customers who use mobility devices.

Ms. Wendy Klancher, TPB staff, provided an update on the activities of the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, including an overview of the types of projects funded by the TPB under the FTA's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs. TPB is conducting a study to assess the TPB's program and projects, which will inform future efforts. Ms. Klancher highlighted the DC Accessible Taxi Project, which has placed twenty accessible cabs on the streets of DC in the last few months.

The forum concluded with the roundtable discussion of transit plans and prospects. Each jurisdiction and transit operator in turn highlighted recent events and upcoming plans and projects for public transportation. In particular, potential business opportunities for the private sector were discussed.

The meeting highlights and a list of attendees are available on the Task Force website:

http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/committee/documents.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=101