



IN MEMORIAM: RON KIRBY REGION LOSES TRANSPORTATION EXPERT, LEADER, AND FRIEND

On the morning of November 12, word of Ron Kirby's death spread quickly among TPB staff, elected officials, newspaper reporters, and others throughout the Washington region. Soon that word spread to many other corners of the country and the world, to all of the places and to all of the people Ron touched throughout his life.

Shock and disbelief were how most people described their feelings in the hours and days afterward. Ron's death was so sudden and unexpected, coming at a time when he was playing a key role in the final stages of a three-year effort to identify the region's top transportation priorities, and just as the TPB was about to kick off a major update of the region's long-range transportation plan.

Ron Kirby joined the staff of the TPB in 1987 as director of transportation planning. For 26 years he led staff in supporting transportation decision-making in the region, whether by collecting, analyzing, and sharing data, convening conferences, workshops, and meetings where officials and the public

could share and discuss their ideas about transportation, or any number of other planning and outreach activities. In his time here, Ron solidified the role of the TPB, and that of the Council of Governments more broadly, as a forum for regional dialogue, discussion, and consensus-building.

In his work, Ron had a keen desire and ability to help everyone—staff, elected officials, the media, and engaged citizens—better understand the transportation challenges and opportunities facing the region, so that we might make more informed decisions about our shared future.

He shared that knowledge with elected officials to help them better understand the complicated transportation planning process, especially federal requirements related to air quality, regional cooperation, and public engagement, among others.

Journalists also came to Ron often for his perspective on the big transportation issues of the day, from traffic and tolls to Metro and land-use, and more. In countless

(Continued on page 6)



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Ronald F. Kirby January 7, 1944 - November 11, 2013

Upcoming meetings and items of interest:

TPB Meeting: December 18, 2013

- Report of Nominating Committee for the Year 2014 TPB Officers
- Briefing on a Performance Analysis of the 2013 CLRP
- Ron Kirby: Life and Accomplishments

Inside this issue of TPBnews:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Highlights of Ron Kirby's Career at the TPB | 7 | Miller, Griffiths Appointed Acting Co-Directors |
| 4 | Remembering Ron Kirby | 7 | Action Items Scheduled for the Nov. TPB Meeting |

HIGHLIGHTS OF RON KIRBY'S CAREER AS DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Ron Kirby served as the Director of Transportation Planning at COG for 26 years, from 1987 to 2013. In that time, he oversaw countless planning and research activities to improve the region's transportation system, convened meetings of area leaders to tackle issues of regional importance, and consulted with state and local transportation officials on major transportation projects and initiatives. Across the following two pages are some of the most significant initiatives and achievements that Ron Kirby oversaw or led in his 26-year tenure at the TPB.

Timeline of Major Projects and Accomplishments

1987

First-Ever Conference on Growth and Transportation (1989)

Two years after arriving at COG, Ron Kirby oversaw the first-ever meeting of regional transportation and land-use officials in a one-day conference on growth and transportation in the metropolitan area. Ron firmly believed that changes in land-use patterns could help moderate demand on the transportation system, and vice versa.

Transportation and Land-Use Scenario Analysis (Mid-1990s)

Under Ron Kirby's direction, the TPB in the mid-1990s first began analyzing combinations of different transportation and land development scenarios in planning for accommodating future growth. These early analyses kicked off nearly two decades of integrated transportation and land-use planning at the TPB, which continues today.

Approval of "The Vision" (1998)

After more than two years of work, the TPB in 1998 approved The Vision, a policy framework outlining key transportation goals and objectives to guide the region's transportation investments into the 21st Century. Ron Kirby worked tirelessly to bring Board members and other officials together to discuss common challenges and to find consensus on a core group of shared goals for the future. The Vision still guides the TPB's work today, serving most recently as the basis for development of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. It was also a building block of COG's 2010 Region Forward Vision.

Creation of the Citizens Advisory Committee (1991)

New federal transportation rules in 1991 called on metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB to increase public involvement in the planning process. Following enactment of the law, Ron Kirby oversaw a major expansion of public involvement activities at the TPB, including the creation of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), which still meets monthly and provides advice and input directly to the TPB.

Founding of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (1994)

Ron Kirby helped found the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), a national organization that works to enhance the ability of MPOs throughout the country to improve metropolitan transportation systems. Ron's work with AMPO included, among other things, advising members of Congress and their staff on issues related to metropolitan transportation planning.

"RideFinders Network" Relaunched as "Commuter Connections" (1996)

The TPB relaunched its existing RideFinders Network program in 1996 as Commuter Connections, an expanded program designed to provide area commuters with information on the region's wide range of alternatives to driving alone—ridesharing, transit, teleworking, bicycling, and walking,—as well as access to the new Guaranteed Ride Home incentive program. The relaunch, orchestrated in large part by Ron Kirby, also established a new Commuter Operations Center, housed at COG, which continues to serve area commuters today.

1999

“A System in Crisis” (2000)

At the start of the new decade and a new century, Ron Kirby helped convene a meeting of members of Congress, state legislators, and key state and local officials to discuss solutions to the region’s transportation funding shortfall, estimated by the TPB to top \$43 billion through 2025. Dubbed “A System in Crisis,” the meeting was just one example of Ron’s tireless work throughout his career to highlight the need for greater transportation investment in the Washington region.

“Time to Act” (2004)

Spurred by “A System in Crisis,” Ron Kirby in 2004 led an effort to identify the region’s most immediate, short-term funding needs. “Time to Act” produced a list of the region’s major unfunded transportation projects through 2010 and called on leaders at the federal, state, regional, and local levels to coordinate efforts to fund these much-needed improvements.

Regional Mobility and Accessibility

Study (Early 2000s)

Ron Kirby oversaw the launch of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS) to examine the impacts of alternative transportation and land-use scenarios, like building more housing closer to future jobs and concentrating new jobs and housing closer to public transit. RMAS continued through the mid-2000s and eventually led to the launch of the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program and development of the CLRPA Aspirations Scenario in 2008.

Federal TIGER Grant (2010)

The TPB was awarded a \$58.8 million grant under the new federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program to fund bus priority treatments in several key bus corridors throughout the region. Ron Kirby was instrumental in assembling the package of projects in the application for federal funds. Today, the region’s first bus rapid transit (BRT) line is being built on Route 1 in Alexandria and Arlington with some of the funds from the TIGER grant.

Version 2.3 Travel Demand Model Unveiled (2011)

Ron Kirby’s political and policy expertise was matched by his technical skill and ability. In 2011, the TPB unveiled its new Version 2.3 Travel Demand Model, which included a number of major improvements to the TPB’s methods for forecasting future travel patterns. In particular, the changes allowed the model to better predict travel to and through activity centers and trips by transit. Throughout his career, Ron was intimately involved in the process of improving the TPB’s various forecasting tools and techniques, and had an unmatched ability to draw on forecast data to contribute to the regional transportation conversation.

Value Pricing for Transportation

Conference (2003)

Ron Kirby was long familiar with the concept of using pricing strategies to manage demand on urban roadways and to raise revenue for maintaining those roadways. In June 2003, Ron brought together local elected officials, business and community leaders, and transportation professionals for the first major public discussion about the need and opportunities for transportation pricing strategies in the Washington region.

Transportation/Land-Use

Connections (TLC) Program (2006)

Ron Kirby was instrumental in launching the TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, designed to provide TPB member jurisdictions with technical assistance to catalyze or enhance linkages between transportation and land-use planning efforts. The TLC Program was born out of the extensive scenario analysis conducted as part of the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS) in the early 2000s.

MATOC Launch (2008)

After September 11, 2001, regional leaders recognized a greater need to share information and coordinate incident management practices for both day-to-day operations and during larger, more disruptive one-time incidents. By 2008, thanks in large part to Ron Kirby, the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) program was fully operational, integrating traffic management systems, improving procedures and planning, and providing more accurate and timely transportation information to officials and the public.

Study of the Public Acceptability of Road-Use Pricing (2013)

In partnership with the Brookings Institution, the TPB in 2010 and 2011 carried out a study of the public acceptability of road-use pricing in the Washington region. Ron Kirby conceived the idea to study public opinion, to apply for federal funding to do it, and to partner with Brookings. The study’s final report was released in late 2013.

Completion of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (2014)

One of the last major projects Ron Kirby worked on was the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, a document that aims to identify the region’s most pressing transportation challenges and the top regional strategies to address them. The Plan focuses mainly on the need to maintain existing roadway and transit facilities in the region, especially Metro. The Plan also calls for a number of other near-term, ongoing, and long-term strategies to address continuing regional challenges. A key feature of the Plan is its use of public opinion research to identify strategies supported by the general public.

2000

2014

REMEMBERING RON KIRBY

In the days after Ron Kirby's death, the Council of Governments developed a website to collect thoughts on Ron's life and career. Below is a sample of the remembrances posted by elected officials, agency partners, and current and former colleagues.

“Ron probably knew more about transportation issues in the region than anybody. He was able to explain complicated transportation issues in a way that the average person could understand them.”

Kathy Porter

Former TPB Chair and Mayor of Takoma Park

“For a generation, Ron Kirby has been a thoughtful and dedicated advocate for our transportation network. Ron's leadership in making transit a regional priority is his legacy to Metro that will benefit millions of riders for years to come.”

Richard Sarles

WMATA General Manager

“Ron Kirby combined intellectual curiosity and rigor with a practical focus on implementation and getting stuff done. His lasting legacy will be a most unique blend of pragmatic leader and pioneering innovator.”

Rob Puentes

Brookings Institution



“Ron's behind-the-scenes work and sage advice saved Washington area commuters a lifetime of avoided congestion and traffic delays. He was both a visionary on what this region could become through smart growth and strategic transportation improvements, and an expert who gained the confidence of elected officials to make it happen.”

Jim Moran

U.S. House of Representatives

“Ron was a brilliant man and a voice of soundness in the complicated processes of directing regional planning for the Washington Metropolitan area. He had an exceptional ability to receive diverse opinions, and then to address them and prioritize them in regional plans and proposals. His absence will leave a large void in transportation planning for the Washington metropolitan area.”

C. Paul Smith

TPB Member representing Frederick County

“I am one of many journalists, officials, politicians, and activists mourning the loss of a man who came as close as anyone I know to being a model public servant. Ron Kirby leaves a legacy not only in asphalt and steel, but also in the example he set for others to emulate.”

Robert McCartney

The Washington Post
(11/13/2013)

“The tragic and untimely death of Ron Kirby is a loss to the entire Washington Metropolitan region and beyond. He was the walking textbook for the region on transportation and land use, always keeping a watchful eye from his vantage point as the regional professional.”

Patsy Ticer

Former TPB Chair and Virginia State Senator

“Metro DC mourns the loss of COG transportation guru Ron Kirby. He was a pro and a fine man. His death shocks us all.”

Gerry Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives

“Ron has had a profound impact on my role as a citizen advisor to the TPB.”

John Epps
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

“With Ron Kirby’s passing, the Washington DC area has lost one of its best transportation planners and an outstanding civic leader.”

Michael Melaniphy
American Public Transportation Association

“Ron was a pillar of the region, leading transportation planning projects at COG for 25 years. Our entire region was made better because of Ron Kirby’s excellent work and tireless commitment.”

James Dinegar
Greater Washington Board of Trade

“In the years under Ron’s direction, the transportation program has expanded dramatically, and the Board has risen to a position of both local and national leadership. I have seen first hand, and deeply admire and respect, the unmatched dedication and initiative Ron gave us.”

Walter Scheiber,
Former MWCOG Executive Director

“While all who knew Ron, knew of his command of policy—big picture and small detail—I also experienced his encouragement for what he saw in my own contributions.”

Dennis Jaffe
Former TPB Citizens Advisory Committee Member

“Ron contributed immeasurably to COG and the region. He had a unique ability to envision solutions to complex transportation issues, present highly sophisticated material to a diverse body of individuals, build consensus among divergent perspectives, and lead a loyal and talented professional staff with aplomb.”

Ruth Crone
Former MWCOG Executive Director

“Montgomery County mourns the loss and celebrates the life of Ron Kirby. His intellect, expertise, and leadership aided the entire DC region in shaping transportation options for a better future.”

Ike Leggett
County Executive
Montgomery County

“Dr. Kirby was always a consummate professional and a highly regarded transportation expert. His work strengthened the District as well as the entire region.”

Mayor Vincent C. Gray
District of Columbia

“Ron Kirby was very well respected. It really shows you how one person in a community can make a big difference across the region.”

Del Pepper
City of Alexandria Council

“Ron had the ability to vision and the capability to make that vision a reality. This accomplishment is especially noteworthy considering our complicated region.

How do we best honor him? I think it is to carry his legacy into the future, which means:

First, never be satisfied with the way things are. Second, never forget that everything we do is to serve the public—all of the public, not just some of the public. Third, never forget to work constructively with all COG members—large and small, inner and outer, and with all stakeholders. Fourth, never forget the importance of transportation to COG. And finally, never forget the importance of COG to this region and its people, whether in transportation matters, environmental issues or safety and security.”

David Snyder
TPB Member representing the City of Falls Church

(Continued from page 1)

newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, feature stories in magazines, and even online chats, Ron graciously shared his vast knowledge about transportation, accumulated over several decades of study and work.



Over the years, Ron convened numerous conferences, workshops, and meetings on all sorts of topics to spur discussion about the unique challenges and opportunities facing our region.

He was also an active leader in national transportation research and policy organizations, like the Transportation Research Board and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, a group he helped found in 1994. His work with AMPO included, among other things, advising members of Congress and their staff on issues related to metropolitan transportation planning.

And Ron provided extensive, informal counsel to local and state officials in the region working on major projects, like the Woodrow Wilson Bridge across the Potomac River, the Intercounty Connector in Maryland, and the 495 Express Lanes in Virginia.

Back at the office, Ron enriched the professional and personal lives of those who worked with him and for him during his 26-year tenure. He was known for engaging one-on-one with junior- and mid-level staff, providing a rare opportunity for new and seasoned professionals alike to interact personally with one of the smartest and most respected transportation experts in the country.

Moving forward, Gerald Miller and Robert Griffiths will serve as acting co-directors of the Department of Transportation Planning. Miller and Griffiths together have more than 60 years of experience on the TPB staff, most of that time spent working directly for or with Ron. "Their breadth of experience, their compatibility, and their strong sense of purpose to move forward are the elements which cemented my decision," said COG Executive Director Chuck Bean, in a statement announcing his appointment of Miller and Griffiths.

Before coming to the TPB, Ron worked at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, where he directed research on innovative approaches to providing public transportation services and oversaw on-the-ground demonstrations of some of those approaches. He earned a PhD in Applied Mathematics from the University of Adelaide in Australia, where his research focused on improving the algorithms used by computerized travel models. He is survived by his brother Neil and sister June, his wife Anne, his former wife Molly, and their two children, Marilyn and Josef.

Ron Kirby's mark on the TPB, everyone who worked for him, the region, his family, and the world was great, and he will be deeply missed. ♦

2014 CAC APPLICATION

Interested citizens from across the Washington region are invited to apply to be considered for the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for 2014. The mission of the CAC is to promote public involvement in transportation planning for the region and provide independent, region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB.

For more information, contact John Swanson at jswanson@mwcog.org or 202-962-3295. Applications are due **Monday, December 23, 2013**.

To apply, visit:
www.mwcog.org/cac

MILLER, GRIFFITHS APPOINTED ACTING CO-DIRECTORS

On November 26, Council of Governments Executive Director Chuck Bean appointed Gerald Miller and Robert Griffiths as Acting Co-Directors of COG's Department of Transportation Planning. Bean consulted closely with staff, Transportation Planning Board (TPB) officials, state Department of Transportation stakeholders, and other leaders before making his decision. Miller and Griffiths together have over 60 years of experience at COG, most of that time spent working directly for or with former director Ron Kirby.

"I am confident that Gerald Miller and Robert Griffiths will ensure that the TPB continues its exceptional work during this critical time for regional transportation planning," Bean said in an announcement to staff and TPB members.

Miller joined COG in 1989 and has been responsible for coordinating the planning activities of the TPB,

including development of the federally-required Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRPP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and their financial plans. He also directs public participation, land-use and transportation coordination, and environmental consultation activities.

Griffiths joined COG in 1975 and has directed the TPB's technical services program for the last 19 years. In that capacity, he oversees the development of technical methods, data, and information systems for the analysis of regional growth and transportation issues. During his 38-year career at COG, Griffiths has worked both as a regional and transportation planner, serving as the project director for many large-scale economic and transportation surveys. He was also responsible for the development of COG's Geographic Information System (GIS) in the early 1990s.

ACTION ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR THE NOVEMBER TPB MEETING

Due to the cancellation of the regularly scheduled meeting of the TPB on November 20, Chair Scott York acted without objection on three items that were slated for approval by the Board:

- Chair York appointed Board members Todd Turner, Muriel Bowser, and David Snyder to serve as the Nominating Committee for 2014 Board officers. The TPB Bylaws provide for TPB officers to serve for one calendar year, from January 1 through December 31. The Nominating Committee will be asked to present a slate of 2014 officers to the Board at its December 18 meeting for approval.
- Chair York approved the final Call for Projects for the Air Quality

Conformity Assessment for the 2014 CLRPP and FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be distributed to state, regional, and local agencies. The Board was briefed on the draft Call for Projects at its October 16 meeting.

- Chair York approved Resolution R8-2014, to amend the budget and work elements in the FY2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The amendment reflects new funding allocations for FY2014 provided by DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT, and adjustments in unobligated FY2012 funding. The TPB Technical Committee and the state DOTs have been briefed on the amendment. The amendment will be reviewed at the TPB Steering Committee meeting on December 6. ♦

UPCOMING DECEMBER AGENDA ITEMS

The December 18 TPB meeting is expected to include the following items:

- Report of Nominating Committee for the Year 2014 TPB Officers
- Briefing on the Final Report of the TPB Bus on Shoulders Task Force
- Briefing on a Performance Analysis of the 2013 CLRPP
- Update on the Revised Draft TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)
- Ron Kirby: Life and Accomplishments ♦

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

December 2013

- 6 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 6 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 11 CANCELLED Regional Taxicab Regulators
- 12 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 12 Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force (12:30 pm)
- 17 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 17 Regional TDM Marketing Group (noon)
- 17 TDM Evaluation Group (2 pm)
- 18 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

January 2014

- 3 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 3 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 9 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 21 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 23 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 24 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 28 TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 30 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

February 2014

- 7 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 7 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 13 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 25 TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)

Dates and times subject to change.

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

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Sarah Crawford at (202) 962-3237 or scrawford@mwcog.org, or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Please allow seven working days for preparation of material.

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