

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

Meeting Notes

FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: February 3, 2011
TIME: 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Room 4&5
CHAIR: Victor Weissberg, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Prince George's County

ATTENDANCE:

Debbie Bowden, Maryland Department of Transportation
Randy Carroll, Maryland Department of Environment
Eulois Cleckley, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Edward Cohen, Transit Riders Action Council
Ed Daniel, Montgomery County Police Department
Richard Drew Marrs, Norfolk Southern
David Goldblatt, Arnold & Potter LLP (Representing CSX)
Mike Heslin, 360jmg LLC (Representing CSX)
Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Railway Express
Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County
Valerie Pardo, Virginia Department of Transportation
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County

CALL-IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicole Katsikides, Maryland Department of Transportation
Lyn Erickson, Maryland Department of Transportation

MWCOG STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Karin Foster, MWCOG
Ron Kirby, MWCOG
Andrew Meese, MWCOG

Victor Weissberg, Freight Subcommittee Chairman—

Mr. Weissberg welcomed attendees and asked for introductions. Following introductions, Mr. Weissberg asked for comment on the January meeting minutes. No comment was received.

Mr. Weissberg explained that this special meeting was convened to discuss the Freight Transportation Priorities list. He provided context for the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) process. As part of a process where TPB subcommittees are identifying priorities in their areas, the Freight Subcommittee is developing its priorities list. Mr. Weissberg also noted that the freight list would inform the Regional Priorities Scoping Process underway.

Mr. Weissberg introduced Karin Foster, TPB Freight Program staff, to present. Ms. Foster spoke to a PowerPoint/handout titled “Freight Transportation Projects” and to a handout titled “TPB Freight Transportation Priorities-Project Descriptions.” An additional matrix handout with a detailed listing of projects was distributed.

The presentation titled “Freight Transportation Priorities” covered the following topics: policy context, objective, background, examples from other TPB Subcommittees, freight transportation priorities, summary, and next steps.

Ms. Foster referenced the TPB Vision to provide policy context. The objectives of developing Freight Transportation Priorities are: 1) To raise the profile/awareness of freight to the TPB and to the region; 2) To have a short list of identified regional corridors and projects important to freight movement in the region; 3) To ensure freight is considered in the Regional Priorities Scoping Process; 4) To have a source of highlighted corridors/projects as new funding opportunities come up.

Ms. Foster commented on the Regional Priorities Scoping Process under development. Key resources for identifying regional priorities include the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), Bicycle and Pedestrian priorities, Airport Access priorities, Management and Operations priorities, and Bus priorities. The Freight Subcommittee efforts to identify priorities would be included with these other key resources.

Ms. Foster also spoke about the April 27, 2011 Regional Freight Forum. The Forum will have three panels: 1) Perspectives on Demand; 2) Freight Transportation System; and 3) Priorities in Freight Investment. Panel 3 will feature TPB Freight Transportation Priorities.

Next, Ms. Foster provided examples of priority lists from several TPB Subcommittees. They include priorities from the Aviation Technical Subcommittee, Regional Bus Subcommittee, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.

Turning to Freight Transportation Priorities, Ms. Foster discussed criteria. The overall list criteria were to: 1) Support Freight Movement; 2) Provide Regional Representation; 3) Provide Modal Representation; 4) Identified in jurisdictional, regional, or state plans or recommended by the Freight Subcommittee; and 5) Overall package represents regional connectivity. Long-term and short-term criteria were also presented.

Long-Term Rail Criteria:

- Identify the most critical rail corridors in the metropolitan region
- Be compatible with commuter rail operations

Long-Term Highway Criteria:

- Identify the most critical highway corridors for each state that falls in the metropolitan region

Short-Term Rail Criteria:

- Provides increased efficiencies of current rail lines
- Facilitates shift of truck tonnage to rail
- Compatible with commuter rail operations

Short-Term Highway Criteria:

- Interstate/Truck Route
- High Truck Volumes
- Supports Freight Generators or Clusters

Following a discussion on criteria, Ms. Foster presented the several rail and highway project alternatives for consideration. (See PowerPoint)

Ms. Foster summed up the presentation noting that the objective was to identify priorities from a regional perspective. The Freight Transportation Priorities List is a statement of the Freight Subcommittee of the TPB. In trying to reach the adopted goals of the TPB Vision and the Freight Plan, the Freight Subcommittee supports the funding of rail and highway projects over and above the list.

Ms. Foster asked attendees to turn to the “Project Description” handout. Ms. Foster explained that this is a first-draft attempt at what TPB staff would like to complete for all projects and ultimately present to the TPB. Ms. Foster also noted that there was widespread consensus on some projects, such as the CSX National Gateway and Norfolk Southern Crescent Corridor for long-term rail. Together, the Chairman and Ms. Foster flipped through the projects, one by one for consensus and feedback.

Questions and Comments:

Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, reiterated that he hopes to see a product from the Freight Subcommittee. He spoke about how the \$60M TIGER grant that TPB won was helped along by some of the priority work done by the Regional Bus Subcommittee. He also noted that it was alright to highlight projects already in the CLRP, as the Aviation Technical Subcommittee has done. This is a statement that these projects should not be removed from the CLRP.

Eulois Cleckley, District Department of Transportation, asked about project criteria. Mr. Kirby commented on efforts within TPB to define performance measures such as emissions, percent vehicles, constraint on transit riders, and benefit/cost analyses. Chairman Weissberg referred to the criteria slides in Ms. Foster’s presentation. The Freight Subcommittee discussed the criteria presented, changed the language to one long-term rail criteria from “compatible” to “supports commuter rail operations/plans.”

The Freight Subcommittee heard input from Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Railway Express (VRE), regarding the language in the Norfolk Southern short-term project

description sheet. One comment referred to the Freight Benefit wording, to substitute the words “and the addition” to “and in the addition.” Another comment referred to the graphic, to reference “future” VRE train rather than assuming current VRE trains and to delete the reference to VRE trains in the bottom graphic text box on page 4.

Mr. Eulois Cleckley, District Department of Transportation Motor Carrier Program, concluded that the Curbside Loading Zone program would better fit as a short-term project. Mr. Cleckley suggested adding the District’s goal to develop a weigh station within city limits as a long-term project.

Ms. Debbie Bowden, Maryland Department of Transportation, suggested deleting the wording “through widening” in the long-term Objective. Ms. Bowden suggested adding “Accommodate growth in freight” under Objective. The Maryland short-term priority was undecided.

Ms. Valerie Pardo, Virginia Department of Transportation, suggested deleting the language “through widening and added HOV/HOT lanes” in the Objective of the Virginia long-term project.

Additional language suggestions were offered to the presentation ahead the briefing that would be made to the Freight Subcommittee on February 4, 2011.

Ed Cohen, Transit Riders Action Council, spoke at length to the benefit of a rail tunnel under the Potomac River. Mr. Cleckley commented that it is a project that is not going to happen because there is no funding.

Mr. Cleckley commented that the Freight Subcommittee has already identified several important regional freight projects and it seems to have narrowed down the Freight Priorities List.

The Freight Subcommittee felt more comfortable with a calling the list the “TPB Freight Subcommittee Regional Highlighted Freight Projects” rather than using the language “priorities.” This new name will be used in future references to this list.

Karin Foster, Freight Forum Announcement —

On April 27, 2011, *Freight: Identifying Regional Freight Transportation Priorities* will take place. The Forum will focus on raising awareness of freight issues the in the National Capital Region and to have a discussion with panel members and attendees on Regional Freight Priorities. The Transportation Planning Board and regional freight stakeholders will be invited.

Next Meeting March 3, 2011