

REPORT

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
July 10, 2003
Karren Pope-Onwukwe, Chair

The Citizens Advisory Committee met on July 10. Discussion topics included the plans for a circulator bus system in downtown D.C. and an update on the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

Discussion of Plans for Downtown Circulator Buses

Len Foxwell of the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) described the planned network of four shuttle bus routes that will connect tourist landmarks and other downtown destinations. He said the project is needed because it will bring tourists into the downtown core, relieve congestion and provide new transit opportunities for D.C. residents. A bus ride will cost 50 cents. The first route is planned to begin operation in July of 2004.

The system will require an annual operating subsidy of \$9 million. This subsidy is expected to be funded roughly in thirds through federal sources, District sources and private sector stakeholder contributions. The system is being established through a partnership including the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the National Capital Planning Commission, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the Downtown DC Business Improvement District.

CAC members' comments and questions included the following:

- Who will actually run the system? Mr. Foxwell said it is expected that WMATA would operate the routes, but the system would be administered by a board separate from WMATA's governing structure. The system's administrative oversight would independently determine its routes, fares, and other policies. In practice it would be a reimbursable service operated by WMATA.
- A member expressed concern that the establishment of a new system might divert attention from the need to improve Metrobus service, including improving bus information. He said he was concerned about the project's apparent rationale: "Metrobus is too hard to understand so we need a new system." Mr. Foxwell responded that the new system would be serving a market that is somewhat different from Metrobus riders.
- Will the buses be able to read SmarTrip cards? Mr. Foxwell answered that they would be.
- Would bus frequencies be changed during off-season. Mr. Foxwell said that the frequency of service to tourist sites would be somewhat reduced in the winter.

- Will the buses operate on clean fuels? Mr. Foxwell said they would be.
- How will the bus service be marketed to tourists? Mr. Foxwell said that, among other things, the Convention and Visitors Bureau will be used extensively to get the word out.
- Would the buses use dedicated bus lanes on K Street? Mr. Foxwell said that if the lanes are built, the service would use them.

Discussion of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study

Bob Griffiths of the COG/TPB staff provided a briefing on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. The CAC has a high interest in this study since the committee played a key role in its inception, and more recently the committee has asked for the inclusion of a scenario that would look at more balanced growth between eastern and western sides of the region. This has become known as the “Region Undivided” scenario.

CAC comments and questions included the following:

- A member was concerned that the job growth that is shifted under different scenarios should include a wide range of employment types, not simply retail or low paying jobs. Mr. Griffiths replied that adjustments had already been made to address this concern.
- A member was concerned that there could be confusion between two scenarios: the scenario that moves more jobs into the region from areas outside the region and the scenario that reallocates jobs from within the region to core jurisdictions. He emphasized that these scenarios had very different implications.
- A member emphasized that the Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts are derived from the jurisdictions’ own plans. He said that this fact should be explained to everyone involved in and observing the study.
- A member said the numbering system for the different scenarios and the order in which they were presented—Scenarios 1, 4a, 4b, and 3—were confusing.
- Members were particularly interested in the Region Undivided scenario:
 - Mr. Griffiths explained under this scenario, jobs on the western side of the region that were projected to be in activity clusters were not reallocated to the eastern side of the region. New concentrations of jobs in the east must be in activity clusters.
 - A member expressed concern about exempting activity clusters in the west because some of these clusters are so large. He said this exemption could dilute the power of the scenario.

ATTENDANCE
CAC Meeting, July 10, 2003

Members in Attendance

1. Karren Pope-Onwukwe, MD Chair
2. Nathaniel Bryant, MD
3. Steve Caflisch, MD
4. Bob Chase, VA
5. Federico Cura, VA
6. Glen Harvie, MD
7. Dennis Jaffe, DC
8. Allen Muchnick, VA

Members Not in Attendance

1. Jim Clarke, MD
2. John Edwards, VA
3. Nancy Jakowitsch, DC
4. Jacque Patterson, DC
5. Lee Schoenecker, DC
6. Stewart Schwartz, VA
7. Merle Van Horne, DC

Alternates in Attendance

Harold Foster, DC

TPB Staff and Guests

Len Foxwell, Downtown Business Improvement District
Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
John Swanson, COG/TPB staff