

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

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Regional Bus Subcommittee
CHAIR: Howard Benn, Montgomery County

Tuesday October 27, 2009
Noon – 2 PM

Meeting Attendees:

David Awbrey, DRPT	Sean Kennedy, WMATA
Michael Ball, Self	Joseph Madison, MTA
Howard Benn, Montgomery County RideOn	Carl Schuettler, Prince Georges DPW&T
Brandon Buchanan, American Bus Association	Ron Skotz, Corridor Transportation Corporation
Anderson-Watters Carrie, Frederick TransIT	Chuck Steigerwald, PRTC
Lynn Everett, NOVA Transportation Commission	Kevin Thornton, Prince George's County
Harold Foster, MNCPPC	Jennifer Todd, DDOT
E. Patricia Hallman, League of Women Voters	Alexis Verzosa, City of Fairfax
Pierre Holloman, City of Alexandria	Francine Waters, Lerner Enterprises
	Randall White, Fairfax County Dept. of Transportation
	Steve Yaffe, Arlington Transit

TPB Staff in Attendance:

Andrew Austin	Robert Griffiths
Michael Eichler	Robert Snead
Mike Farrell	

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Howard Benn, Montgomery County

The chair welcomed the meeting participants and called the meeting to order. He asked the members in attendance to introduce themselves.

Update on TPB Surveys

Bob Griffiths, TPB Staff

Mr. Griffiths handed out the final version of the TPB Regional Bus Survey Technical Report which describes the details of the bus survey process. He suggested that he could present more information on the household travel survey at the November meeting, and noted that an analysis of modal share by jurisdictions is currently available.

Mr. Verzosa inquired about how one acquires the data files from the regional bus survey. Mr. Griffiths stated that the standard data request process should be used.

Mr. Thornton asked about the format of the jurisdictional profiles. Mr. Griffiths replied that they will contain household travel characteristics, including number of licensed drivers, number of vehicles available, age distributions of household members, employment status, jurisdiction of work, travel profiles and number of trips.

Mr. Benn inquired about the number of transit trips in the region that were single-link bus trips, meaning the entire trip consisted of a single bus trip. Mr. Griffiths replied that that specific statistic was currently not available, but noted that the bus-only percentage is approximately one-seventh. Mr. Benn noted that a big issue in transit provision is the need for transfers: passengers prefer one-seat trips versus needing to transfer.

Mr. Verzosa inquired whether the survey included willingness-to-pay data, asking how much a passenger would have been willing to pay for the trip. This sort of data would be helpful in light of pending fare increases. Mr. Griffiths replied that such data was not collected. He noted, however, that the TPB Household Travel Survey asks transit users the amount of fare they pay, and approximately 28% of transit users were unable to recall their usual transit fare. Mr. Benn noted that this is a reflection of SmarTrip card and SmartBenefits, and stated that Metrorail SmarTrip use percentage is currently approaching 70%.

Mr. Benn noted that the I-95 Corridor Coalition evaluated how air passengers in the corridor get to the airport, suggesting this data could be useful for the 2009 TPB Air Passenger Survey, currently under way. Mr. Griffiths noted that the Air Passenger Survey is funded by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and the Maryland Aviation Administration, is conducted every two years, and provides a good trend analysis of modal share of to- and from-airport trips. He noted that the modal share of transit trips to Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA) is one of the highest in the nation, at approximately 14% of all airport trips taken by Metrorail, and 16% for trips taken by local residents.

Briefing on the Draft Call For Projects for the 2010 CLRP and the FY 2011-2016 TIP

Andrew Austin, TPB Staff

Mr. Austin presented the draft Call for Projects to the subcommittee, outlining the CLRP and TIP process and noting the timeline for this year's CLRP cycle, planning factors and project submission form. He noted that this document is current in draft and is planned to be finalized and release at the November 18 TPB meeting.

Several committee members inquired how this process applied to the needs of transit operating agencies, using the replacement of buses as an example. Mr. Austin replied that projects that do not impact the air quality conformity determination can be added at any time with an amendment to the current TIP. However, if buses are being replaced with more fuel-efficient, or cleaner vehicles then those changes should be captured in the Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures (TERMs) Tracking Sheet.

Committee members discussed the possibility of pursuing funding from a wider pool of federal agencies

Mr. Eichler drew attention to the policy framework section of the document, noting that the TPB vision, finalized in 1998, is the set of leading regional guidelines for project submissions. He mentioned that four new potential planning factors have arisen in the intervening 11 years, including safety and security, climate change, bike and pedestrian issues, and regional bus priorities, and suggested that the subcommittee could use the current comment period to advocate for additional planning factors to be added to the Call for Projects document. Mr. Benn suggested that the proper avenue for such advocacy would be through existing jurisdictional hierarchies, and stated that each operator could advocate more strongly for their individual needs. Mr. Eichler suggested that existing hierarchies will likely focus on local priorities over regional priorities that would have multi-jurisdictional benefits, and stated that the subcommittee has an opportunity to provide feedback to this process at a regional level.

Briefing on the White Flint Sector Plan / A Developer's Perspective

Francine Waters, Senior Director of Transportation, Lerner

Ms. Waters presented to the subcommittee a redevelopment plan drafted by a coalition of developers in the White Flint section of Montgomery County, MD, and MNCPPC, that described turning the current, suburban sprawl into a walkable, mixed-use downtown area supported by a dedicated transitway. She noted that new infrastructure included in the plan would be largely funded by the coalition.

Briefing on the White Flint Sector Plan / A Government's Perspective

Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County DOT

Mr. Benn, in Mr. Erenrich's stead, shared with the subcommittee the Montgomery County executive perspective on the above proposed White Flint Sector Plan. There are concerns about specifics – the BRT segment as proposed is too short

to be viable, the proposed financing plan is inconsistent with County practices and has the net effect of shifting much of the public financing to outside the sector – but overall, broadly, the concepts are in line with DOT thinking and has the department’s support.

Update on the TPB Scenario Study, Transit Component

Michael Eichler, TPB Staff

Mr. Eichler passed out a memo with attached maps and tables describing the transit operating assumptions for the CLRP Aspirations Scenario. He invited committee members to send him feedback on the scenario transit network and its underlying assumptions. He stated that there is a new push to get results from the scenario study by December, 2009, and as such any feedback should be offered as soon as possible.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

The next meeting of the TPB’s Regional Bus Subcommittee will be held on November 24, 2009. It is possible that the subcommittee may meet sometime in early December instead of late November and late December, in order to reduce potential conflicts with autumn and winter holidays.

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee’s website: <http://www.mwcog.org/TPB/RBS/docs/>