

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Notes

FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: January 15, 2009
TIME: 1:00 PM to 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Meeting Room 3
CHAIRS: Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County, Department of Public Works and Transportation

ATTENDANCE:

Eulois Cleckley, District of Columbia, Department of Transportation
Alison Conway, University of Texas at Austin
Anne Ferro, Maryland Motor Truck Association
Harold Foster, Prince George's County Planning Department
Nicole Katsikides, Maryland Department of Transportation
Terry Levinson, Argonne National Laboratory
Valerie Pardo, Virginia Department of Transportation
Rick Rybeck, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Michael Weil, National Capital Planning Commission
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County, Dept. of Public Works and Transportation
David Zaidain, National Capital Planning Commission

COG/TPB STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Michael Farrell
Karin Foster
Jim Hogan
Andrew Meese
Patrick Zilliacus

Welcome, Introductions— Chairman Mr. Victor Weissberg from Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation welcomed attendees. Mr. Weissberg asked everyone to introduce themselves and their affiliation and subsequently introduced our first speaker.

Briefing on District of Columbia Department of Transportation Inaugural Planning and Impacts on Freight—Mr. Eulois Cleckly, the District of Columbia's new Motor Carrier Program Manager presented on the Presidential Inaugural and how this would impact transportation and goods movement. The District expected an estimated two million visitors, 10,000 charter buses, and numerous events across the city over several days up to and on January 20, 2009, Inauguration Day.

Auto traffic was projected to increase significantly starting on the weekend prior to the event and remain heavy until Wednesday, January 21. Traffic was expected to be heaviest from 4:00 am to noon and from 6:00 PM to midnight on Inauguration Day. As for the traffic environment, buses would be parked at various locations in the city and high pedestrian traffic was expected throughout the downtown cordon on Inauguration Day.

Mr. Cleckley detailed transportation restrictions for the event. Road and bridge closures would begin at 12:01 A.M. Monday, January 20, 2009. Businesses in Wards 1, 2, and 6 would be most impacted. There would be reduced lane capacities on major truck routes. Trucks were encouraged to be out of the city by Sunday January 18th. The District of Columbia Motor Carrier Office engaged in an expansive outreach effort to send out the message about transportation restrictions to truck, bus, and motor coach drivers (American Trucking Association, American Bus Association, United Motor Coach Association). The District prepared a memo on Inauguration transportation recommendations and distributed it to these communities through several outlets (e.g. letter, outreach organizations, e-mails, etc).

The District encouraged no deliveries on January 19th and January 20th. Traffic volume would cause issues with on time delivery within District limits. Truckers were told to avoid the Capital Beltway and consider alternative routes such as 19th street and 20th street. The District warned shippers and carriers to expect limited deliveries from midnight January 18th to noon January 21st.

As a coping measure, many establishments arranged to ensure deliveries would be received by January 18, 2009. In some cases establishments such as restaurants rented containers (sometimes refrigerated containers) to keep extra stock on hand.

Questions and Comments:

Freight attendees asked about the hours of service restrictions on bus drivers during the event. Mr. Cleckly explained that the day has been designated a State of Emergency day for the District of Columbia and any hours of service conflict was lifted for buses in the District of Columbia on that day.

It was also noted by Mr. Patrick Ziliacus that there are few diesel fuel gas stations in the district. Mr. Cleckly noted that the City would have several tow trucks on hand on Inauguration Day in case of any auto or truck problems. Mr. Cleckly also mentioned the District's three-minute idling restriction for buses and trucks. He explained that the district had arranged for bus drivers to convene in one bus or location in the parking lot, a warning station, so that all the drivers could turn their vehicle off.

Policy Options for Truck User Charging— Ms. Alison Conway, a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin presented on Truck User Charging, a subject she had also presented earlier in the week at the Annual Transportation Research Board Conference.

Ms. Conway first spoke about United States (US) federal user fees, listing various fuels and tax rates. Federal fuel taxes range from 4.3 cents per gallon for compressed natural gas to 24.4 cents per gallon for diesel and kerosene fuel. She also reviewed the federal sales tax rates for tires, trucks, tractors, and trailers. There is an additional annual tax for heavy vehicles, \$100 for trucks 55 to 85 kips GVW and \$550 for trucks over 75 kips GVW.

Ms. Conway also review state user fees: fuel taxes, registration fees, fixed rate permits, and in some cases vehicle-mile taxes. United States toll road rate structures are largely dependent on the number of axles on a vehicle. The general state tolling justification is that trucks with more axles, carry more weight, cause more pavement damage, and therefore are tolled higher.

The Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) encouraged provisions for increased technology in tolling. Washington, Oregon, and Iowa have tested out vehicle mileage schemes. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission recommended: (1) cost-based pricing; (2) to replace the gas tax with distance-based fees; and (3) cost should reflect consumption for heavy vehicles.

Ms. Conway continued with a discussion on advanced charging mechanisms. She mentioned three toll roads with variable trucks rates: (1) the Chicago Skyway, where trucks are tolled based on number of axles and discounted when driving overnight; (2) the Illinois Tollway, where trucks are tolled based on number of axles and discounted when driving overnight; and (3) the New York Thruway, where trucks are tolled based on number of axles and “incentivized pricing” measures. Ms. Conway also noted two US Open Toll Roads, SH 121 in Texas which tolls based on number of axles and Loop 49 in Texas which tolls based on single unit or multi-unit trucks. She also gave international examples. Santiago, Toronto 407, and the Trans-Israel Highway all have open toll roads based on single unit or multi-unit trucks. The Melbourne CityLink tolls trucks based on a light truck or heavy truck measure.

European Union Policy directive 1999/62/EC and 2006/38/EC were also described for comparison to US policies. Directive 1999/62/EC laid three rules: (1) User charges “shall be in proportion to the duration of the use made of the infrastructure;” (2) “Weighted average tolls shall be related to the cost of constructing, operating, and developing the infrastructure network concerned;” and (3) Rates can vary by emissions class or time-of-day. The 2006/38/EC Directive stated that (1) “Tolls shall be based on the principle of the recovery of infrastructure costs only. Specifically the weighted average tolls shall be related to the construction costs and the costs of operating, maintaining, and developing the infrastructure network concerned. The weighted average tolls may also include a return on capital or profit margin based on market conditions;” (2) That rate variation was allowed for “combating environmental damage, tackling congestion, minimizing infrastructure damage, optimizing the use of the infrastructure concerned, or promoting road safety;” (3) To prohibits excess revenues; and (4) To requires use of emissions criteria by 2010. Ms. Conway also displayed congestion, emissions, time-based vignettes, and weight-distance charges tables to compare between

various European countries (and Singapore). These EU directives represent quite a departure from current US practices regarding tolling and user fees.

As a conclusion, Ms Conway offered four observations:

- 1) Policy changes in the United States and European Union indicate a shift towards cost-based pricing;
- 2) It is technologically feasible to collect real-time data on: (1) Axle weights and distances; (2) Traffic conditions; and (3) Emissions;
- 3) Many challenges to real implementation exist: (1) Additional necessary changes in policy; (2) Privacy concerns; and (3) Structuring pricing to reflect variables necessary for policy goals while remaining transparent; and
- 4) Pricing as a tool to meet industry needs should be further explored.

Questions and Comments:

Freight Committee attendees pointed out that in Maryland, trucks are allowed on the Electronic Toll Lane (Ms. Conway had commented that there are no ETLs where trucks are allowed in the nation).

Discussion arose from Ms. Conway's presentation about how to measure the truck versus auto damage to road pavement? Are they being proportionally tolled?

Comments were also made about policies in other countries. In London and Stockholm, there is no distinction between a car or truck when entering the city-center. In Germany, there is a weight-distance charge and all trucks have a GPS/RFID tracking system on it to track vehicle mileage.

TPB Freight Program Update—Ms. Karin Foster provided a brief update on Freight Program efforts. As part of the *Integrating Freight into the Constrained Long Range Plan* report, staff will undergo a telephone survey of regional shippers, carriers, and trucking companies in the National Capital Region. The aim of this survey is get a sense of their transportation concerns and to potentially identify “freight potential projects” that would be supportive to the freight community. Results from this survey will be analyzed and included in the *Integrating Freight into the Constrained Long Range Plan* report.

Next Meeting March 19, 2009

Meeting Adjourned