



TPB RECEIVES BRIEFING ON COOPERATIVE FORECASTING PROCESS

When it comes to forecasting the future, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, or COG, and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, or TPB, project that the region will see a growth of approximately 1.6 million jobs and 1 million households between now and 2040, according to the Round 8.2 Cooperative Forecast, the draft of which was released earlier this year.

The Cooperative Forecasting Process, a longstanding technical effort by COG and the TPB, provides a consistent set of local and regional projections for population, household, and job growth. Established in 1975, the Cooperative Forecasting Program provides projections that are based on common assumptions about

future growth, and includes inputs for transportation, water and air quality modeling, local government planning, and private sector market analysis.

TPB received a briefing on the Cooperative Forecasting Process, and discussed the implications of current forecasts for regional transportation planning at its March 20 meeting.

The process includes three major steps that ultimately yield regional and jurisdictional growth forecasts. The first step involves developing benchmark projections using a regional econometric model that is developed

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MORE NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL TRAVEL SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

At its meeting on March 20, the Transportation Planning Board released the results of a second round of geographically-focused household travel surveys that it carried out in the spring of 2012 in seven specific study areas across the region.

Bob Griffiths, of TPB staff, briefed the Board on the findings, which he said shed light on differences in travel patterns based on differences in development densities, demographic characteristics, and transportation options available to residents.

The seven surveyed areas were: the New York Avenue/Rhode Island Avenue corridor and the Friendship Heights area in the District of Columbia; the East Falls Church and West Falls Church Metrorail station areas in Falls Church and Fairfax County; the Beauregard corridor in Alexandria; the National Harbor/Oxon Hill area in Prince George's County; Dulles North in Loudoun County; and the St. Charles/Waldorf area in Charles County.

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Upcoming meetings and items of interest:

TPB Meeting: April 17, 2013

- Approval of Regional Bike to Work Day Proclamation
- Briefing on Activities to Increase Ridership on Metrobus System

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TPB HEARS UPDATE ON MATOC OPERATIONS

This is “certainly one of the most important programs in the region that nobody knows about,” said Arlington Board member Chris Zimmerman of the TPB’s Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination, or MATOC, Program.

At its meeting on March 20, the TPB received a briefing on the key role the MATOC Program has in the region’s transportation operations, including actions taken during the Presidential Inauguration and Hurricane Sandy.

TPB members learned that MATOC monitors a host of regional incidents, including vehicle crashes, major construction activities on highways or arterials, major disruptions to transit service, severe weather events, and major planned special events. With an annual operating cost of \$1.2 million, including support for the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) operations, MATOC operates between 4:30 am and 8:00 pm on weekdays out of a command center in Greenbelt, and can seamlessly transition to 24/7 operations when necessary.

MATOC is a joint program between the state departments of transportation and WMATA. Its mission is to provide situational awareness of transportation operations in the region through the development and communication of timely and reliable information. This information enables operating agencies and the public to make better decisions in the wake of traffic and other incidents that affect the transportation network.

For the 2013 Presidential Inauguration, MATOC participated in pre-event meetings and exercises, and ramped up to 24/7 operations on January 20 and 21. During Hurricane Sandy, MATOC began monitoring and tracking the storm over a week prior to landfall, and elevated reporting of major incidents, road closures, and transit services.

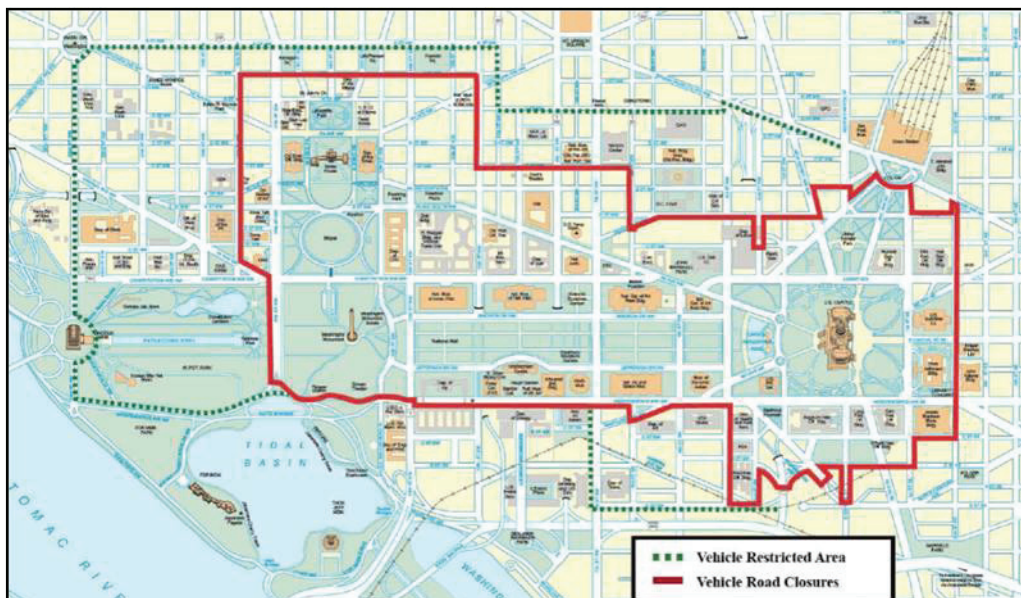
At the TPB meeting, DC Councilmember Phil Mendelson emphasized that MATOC has a unique vantage point on incidents because it reviews information through a regional lens. Mendelson inquired how successful the response has been to information MATOC staff has provided to agency partners.

Tom Jacobs, Director of the Center for Advanced Transportation Technology at the University of Maryland, responded that agencies have responded favorably to MATOC’s information and recommendations due to the close working relationships that have been built at the operational level.

For more information about the MATOC Program, please visit: www.matoc.org. ♦

MATOC is “one of the most important programs in the region that nobody knows about.”

-Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board Member



For the 2013 Presidential Inauguration, MATOC participated in pre-event meetings and exercises, assembled an informational website for transportation partners, and ramped up to 24/7 operations with two 2-person teams on January 20 and 21.

HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY RESULTS

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In his presentation, Griffiths focused on the differences in demographic and travel mode characteristics between households in higher-density areas and those in lower-density areas.

“Higher-density areas showed significant transit, walk, and bike modal shares,” Griffiths said. “But they had a higher proportion of households living in apartments and condos, fewer households with children, and good proximity to frequent transit service, both bus and rail.”

“The lower-density areas – National Harbor, Dulles North, and St. Charles – all have higher single-occupancy vehicle use, higher proportions of households with two or more workers with children living in them, and less direct access to frequent transit,” he told Board members.

One outlier Griffiths pointed out was the East and West Falls Church Metrorail station areas, which he said had many of the demographic characteristics of outer suburban communities, but shares of transit, walking, and biking that were closer to those of higher-density areas.

Griffiths said that the data from the surveys highlight a challenge for the future of the region’s activity centers, where planners hope more people will choose to live and use travel modes other than private automobiles.

The results of the second round of surveys add to the findings from surveys of ten other areas gathered in late 2010 and early 2011. The results of all the focused-area surveys will supplement the findings of a region-wide survey conducted in 2007 and 2008, which the TPB uses

to calibrate models that forecast future travel patterns. The focused-area surveys will also provide local jurisdictions with more fine-grained detail on travel patterns in particular areas of interest.

At the March 20 meeting, Board Member Sam Zimbabwe, of the District Department of Transportation, asked Griffiths how the results of the new surveys will influence the regional travel model. “We probably need to compare some of these findings with the outputs expected by the model to see how we need to refine the model,” Zimbabwe said.

Dan Emerine, of the District Office of Planning, suggested that finding ways to increase the response rate for the survey, perhaps by making it available online, could make it easier to gather an adequate sample for smaller areas.

Gary Erenrich, who represents the Montgomery County department of transportation on the Board, stressed the importance of looking at how much households drive in a given day. “One of the parameters I find very important is vehicle-miles of travel per household,” Erenrich said. “That’s a way of summarizing a lot of differences in travel patterns and looking to see what correlation there is between density, transportation options, and travel behavior.”

The next round of geographically-focused surveys is scheduled for later in 2013. It will include surveys of four areas each in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. ♦

OTHER MARCH AGENDA ITEMS

The TPB’s March 20 meeting also included the following items:

- Approval of Amendment to the Additional Air Quality Conformity Analysis Conducted to Respond to the EPA Redesignation of the Washington Region under the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Approval of Amendments to the FY2013 Unified Planning Work Program, and approval of FY2013 Carryover Funding to FY2014.

- Approval of FY2014 Unified Planning Work Program and FY2014 Commuter Connections Work Program.
- Approval of Request for COG, as the Administrative Agent for the TPB, to become the Designated Recipient for the New Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility Program under MAP-21 in the Washington Region. ♦

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by the private sector. This “top down” approach uses comprehensive econometric analysis to predict the total amount of growth that the region can expect over a 30-year forecasting period.

The second step consists of local planning staff from COG and TPB member jurisdictions individually preparing growth forecasts. Under this “bottom up” step, planners base short-term forecasts on things like current construction, building permits, and rezoning applications. Planners base longer-term forecasts on things like adopted and approved area master plans and current zoning capacity.

The final and most critical step of the process, reconciliation, allows for a comparison of the top-down and bottom-up methods of data collection. Local planners work through the COG Cooperative Forecasting Subcommittee to reconcile the regional sum of the independently prepared local forecasts with the regional projections of the econometric model. Through this process, members of this subcommittee review the forecasts for each jurisdiction, and have the opportunity to question the reasonableness of the methodology, as well as the assumptions that were used in generating these forecasts. Reconciliation occurs once it is determined that sum of the local government forecast are within about three percent of the maximum amount of growth that is set forth through the econometric model.

The results of the Cooperative Forecasts do not represent an inevitable future, since they cannot account for unpredictable global con-

ditions or national policy changes. They also do not necessarily reflect a preferred growth pattern for the region.

Several TPB members expressed their opinions about the nature of the Cooperative Forecasting Process and implications for policy development and planning. Marc Elrich, who represents Montgomery County, suggested that the results of the Cooperative Forecasting Process are sometimes used to justify “upzoning” to provide for more development when in fact they represent the accommodations local governments are already making in anticipation of future growth: “I don't think we convey to people how much these projections are based on what we've already planned for,” Elrich said.

Chris Zimmerman, who represents Arlington County, concurred with Elrich, claiming that the local forecasts that serve as inputs into the Cooperative Forecast already include aspirational plans for jurisdictions, which he contended are “appropriate at the local level.” Zimmerman continued, “people are making plans for the way they want their economy to grow, and they're going to put a certain amount of assumption about...economic development and employment [into those projections].”

TPB Chair York, who also serves as Chair of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, commented on the relationship between job and household growth throughout the region, and the resulting services – like education – that individual jurisdictions must also provide as the region continues to grow. He specifically called attention to the popula-

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Bike to Work Day is May 17, 2013!
Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association invite YOU to join over 10,000 area commuters to celebrate bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work.

Visit <http://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/> to register and learn more!

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tion growth in the region’s outer jurisdictions: “look at the numbers of the growth [in Loudoun and Prince William Counties]. During my time on the Board, we’ve had to build 50 schools in order to keep up with the growth. It puts us in a position to go out and aggressively do economic development to pay for the costs of education,” he said.

Shyam Kannan, who represents WMATA, offered two innovative suggestions for alternative ways to consider existing capacity and regional growth. Rather than simply projecting employment growth, Kannan suggested that the TPB consider evaluating employment densities within office space. He questioned whether existing office space could accommodate fewer, the same, or more workers in the future. Kannan also posited that the TPB could consider an overall trend of decreasing housing and unit sizes in its projections. He proposed that projected household growth may or may not imply a certain minimum quantity of physical space, which he said could be a novel consideration for the region. “Perhaps we could innovate here,” Kannan suggested.

The Cooperative Forecasting Process goes through a major series, or “Round,” every four years, with updates typically conducted on an annual basis. These updates present opportunities for local governments to review and consider new transportation facilities, and to capture local land use and comprehensive plan changes. Round 8.0 was released in 2010. In July, the COG Board will be asked to adopt Round 8.2 Forecasts as the official growth forecasts for the region. ♦

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UPCOMING APRIL AGENDA ITEMS

The April 17 TPB Meeting is expected to include the following:

- Approval of Regional Bike to Work Day Proclamation.
- Briefing on TPB Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Responsibilities under MAP-21 and Approval of a TPB Letter to the US Department of Transportation Regarding Performance Measures and Targets for Congestion in the Washington Region.
- Briefing on Activities to Increase Ridership on the Metrobus System.
- Briefing on Update of the CLRP Aspirations Scenario.
- Update on TPB Bus on Shoulder Task Force Meeting
- Notice of proposed Amendment to Update Projects and Funding in the District of Columbia Section of the FY2013-2018 TIP. ♦

TPB terminology

AFA	Access for All Advisory Committee
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
CLRP	Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan
COG	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NVTA	Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
RTPP	Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	Transportation Planning Board
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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 N. Capitol St., N.E. (Enter from 1st St., N.E.).

April 2013

- 5 Technical Committee (9 am)
- 5 Steering Committee (noon)
- 9 Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Technical Subcommittee (1:30 pm)
- 11 Freight Subcommittee (1pm)
- 11 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 16 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 17 Bus-On-Shoulder Task Force Meeting #3 (10 am)
- 17 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 23 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 25 Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee (noon)

May 2013

- 3 Technical Committee (9 am)
- 3 Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Car Free Day Meeting (11:30 am)
- 8 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 9 Citizens Advisory Committee (6pm)
- 15 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 17 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 21 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 21 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting (1 pm)
- 23 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 29 TPB Annual Transit Forum (11 am)

June 2013

- 7 Technical Committee (9 am)
- 7 Steering Committee (noon)
- 13 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 18 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 18 Regional TDM Marketing Group (noon)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 25 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 28 Technical Committee (9 am)

Note: The July Technical Committee Meeting will take place one week earlier than normal due to the Independence Day holiday. Please check above to confirm the date and time of your meeting.

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, scrawford@mwcog.org, or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Please allow seven working days for preparation of material.

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