

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

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**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
February 16, 2011**

Members and Alternates Present

Monica Backmon, Prince William County
Melissa Barlow, FTA
Andrew Beacher, Loudoun County
Nat Bottigheimer, WMATA
Muriel Bowser, DC Council
Colleen Clay, City of Takoma Park
Reuben B. Collins, Charles County
Kerry Donley, City of Alexandria
Daniel Drummond, City of Fairfax
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County, DOT
Lyn Erickson, MDOT
Rene'e Hamilton, VDOT
Cathy Hudgins, Fairfax Board of Supervisors
Sandra Jackson, FHWA
John D. Jenkins, Prince William County
Maurice Keys, DC DOT
Carol Krimm, City of Frederick
Mary A. Lehman, Prince George's County
Michael C. May, Prince William County
Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Colleen Mitchell, DC Office of Planning
Garrett Moore, VDOT
Mark Rawlings, DC-DOT
Karina Ricks, DC-DOT
Rodney Roberts, City of Greenbelt
Paul Smith, Frederick County
Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Reuben Snipper, City of Takoma Park
Kanti Srikanth, VDOT
Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning

Todd M. Turner, City of Bowie
Lori Waters, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Jonathan Way, Manassas City
Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County
Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park
Christopher Zimmerman, Arlington County

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Ron Kirby
Gerald Miller
Robert Griffiths
Nicholas Ramfos
Andrew Meese
Andrew Austin
John Swanson
Michael Farrell
Wendy Klancher
Sarah Crawford
Deb Kerson Bilek
Jane Posey
Debbie Leigh
Deborah Etheridge
Rex Hodgson
Gareth James
Karin Foster
Daivamani Sivasailam
Dave Robertson COG.EO
Steve Kania COG/OPA
Joan Rohlf's COG/DEP
Dave McMillion COG/DPSH
Alexis Verzosa City of Fairfax
Tina Slater CAC + Action Committee for Transit
Randy Carroll MDE
Bill Orleans HACK
Betsy Massie PRTC
Judi Gold Chair Bowser's Office
John B. Townsend AAA Mid-Atlantic
Greg McFarland NVTC
Eric Sutton
Taran Hutchinson MATOC
Tom Jacobs University of Maryland
Art Smith Arlington
Matthew Moskitis Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

Maureen Budetti	CAC
Stewart Schwartz	CSG
Doris Ray	Indep. Center of NOVA
John Pasek	WMATA
David Alpert	RAC
Steve Kral	WMATA
Andy Scott	MDOT
Mike Harris	VA DRPT
Steve Strauss	DDOT
Jim Maslanka	Alexandria
Tom Biesiadny	Fairfax County DOT
Mark Miller	RESF-1/WMATA

1. Public Comment on TPB Procedures and Activities

Mr. Moskitis, representing the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, read a prepared statement from Robert Chase. He said that he supports conducting the air quality conformity analysis necessary to amend and include the I-95 HOT lanes project in the 2010 CLRP, and stated that the facility will offer better transit, carpooling, and single occupancy vehicle choices to area residents of all incomes, races, and backgrounds. He added that the proposed HOT lanes project will provide better access to regional activity centers, and provide new capacity that can save lives in the event of a homeland security emergency. Copies of his remarks were received for the record.

Mr. Schwartz, representing the Coalition for Smarter Growth, called for the TPB to study alternatives to the HOT lanes project before moving forward. He mentioned that two bills sponsored by the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance – HB-1998 and HB-1999 – currently sit with the Virginia Senate, and stated that both bills take a highway-oriented approach to Northern Virginia and do not account for land-use/transportation solutions. He commended the CEO's for Cities' critique of the methodology used in the congestion measures published by the Texas Transportation Institute, and stated that the Virginia Governor's transportation bill fails to provide funding for primary, secondary, and urban roads, as well as fails to address maintenance. Finally, he advocated for an alternative that is an HOV-only addition to the I-66 CLRP amendment, and expressed concern that the governors' and mayors' study on Metro governance fails to allow for local elected official input.

Chair Bowser thanked Mr. Schwartz for his comments, and said that he could submit a written version of his testimony, which she said would be helpful for TPB members.

2. Approval of Minutes of January 19 Meeting

Mr. Zimmerman moved to approve the minutes of the January 19 TPB meeting.

Ms. Smyth seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Mr. Kellogg said that the Technical Committee met on February 4, and reviewed several items that are on the TPB agenda, including: the transportation impacts of the January 26 snowstorm and the MATOC program; major projects to include an air quality conformity assessment for the 2011 CLRP; the draft FY 2012 Commuter Connections Work Program; and the draft 2012 Unified Planning Work Program. He said that the Technical Committee would consider the new Commuter Connections Work Program and the Unified Planning Work program again in March in preparation for the TPB to adopt these items at its March meeting. He added that the Technical Committee discussed four additional items, including: examples of measuring progress towards regional goals using baseline performance measures for the 2010 CLRP; a comparison of transportation model data sources from the 2000 Census, the 2009 American Community Survey, and the 2008 Regional Household Travel Survey; a preliminary project list developed by the Regional Freight Subcommittee on long and short-term priorities for freight railroad and highway projects; and an update on the TIGER grant projects.

Chair Bowser inquired about discussion pertaining to the possibility of mode share being added as a performance measure.

Mr. Kirby said that the modal share as a performance measure was included in a discussion during the meeting of the TPB Priorities Plan Scoping Task Force, which was held earlier that day.

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Dobelbower, the nominated chair for the 2011 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), introduced himself as a District resident, small business owner, and a member of the Emergency Response Team. He said he was appointed to the CAC last year, and served as vice-chair. He said that he did not have a formal written report because the 2011 CAC has not yet been formally appointed. He then summarized the proceedings of an informal CAC meeting, which occurred in February. He said the CAC, along with other members of the public, received a briefing on project submissions for the 2011 CLRP. He also said that the CAC members discussed the transportation priorities plan, and he emphasized the CAC's commitment to being a strong and consistent advocate for a regional priorities plan, including the process to make the plan a reality. He articulated the CAC's mission as one that promotes public involvement in transportation planning for the region, and as one that provides independent region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB on transportation plans and issues. He concluded by stating that, as the presumptive CAC chair, he looks forward to representing the interests of the region's citizens.

5. Report of the Steering Committee

Mr. Kirby said the Steering Committee met on February 4, and did not take any action to amend the TIP or the UPWP. Referring to a pamphlet which was distributed, he announced out that the TPB is hosting a spring session of the Community Leadership Institute (CLI) on Thursday, March 31 in the evening and Saturday, April 2 during the day, and said that TPB members may send nominations to Deborah Bilek of TPB staff. He said nominations are due by the end of February, and also mentioned that a number of CLI graduates have joined the CAC.

Mr. Kirby also announced that the TPB will be hosting a Regional Freight Forum, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, in the Thornton Room on April 27. Mr. Weissberg, chair of the Freight Subcommittee, said that the forum has an impressive agenda, and expressed hope that it will be informative and successfully elevate freight issues for the region. He encouraged TPB members to attend, and invited members of the TPB to spread the word among their individual jurisdictions.

Mr. Kirby reviewed to the letters which were included in the mailout packet. He said that the EPA and DOT have approved the update to the 2010 CLRP which was adopted in November. He referenced a letter from Congressman Connolly supporting a new surface transportation authorization act, as well as willingness to raise gas taxes or other potential revenue mechanisms to support such legislation. He summarized a letter from Federal Highway Administration Administrator Victor Mendez to Mayor Judith Davis of the City of Greenbelt concerning the study of widening the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. He noted a letter that describes MATOC as part of a response to an invitation from VDOT to MPOs requesting funding requests to be prioritized as VDOT enters its programming process for the upcoming year. He concluded by mentioning a letter from Access for All Committee Chairman Wojahn regarding WMATA's policies for services for persons with disabilities.

6. Chair's Remarks

Chair Bowser commented that there are several things to focus on in the upcoming year. She expressed interest in hearing from members of the TPB in order to ensure that priorities for their respective jurisdictions are being addressed by the board. She emphasized the importance of making decisions that are equitable and address the needs of all citizens. She acknowledged the concern that has been previously expressed about making sure the TPB's voice is heard in discussions about Metrorail and Metrobus. She highlighted the importance of collaboration, and making sure that the TPB remains "TIGER ready." She acknowledged First Vice Chair Turner, who is also the Chair of the Priorities Plan Scoping Task Force, as well as Second Vice Chair Waters from Loudoun County.

She welcomed new TPB member Mary Lehman from the Prince George's County Council, and invited other new members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Collins introduced himself as a county commissioner representing Charles County.

Chair Bowser welcomed Mr. Collins, and expressed delight in working with all the members of the TPB.

ACTION ITEM

7. Appointments to the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee for the Year 2011

Chair Bowser explained that the TPB appoints 15 members to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) each calendar year, six members designated by the outgoing CAC and nine members nominated by TPB officers. She referred to the mailout packet with information about the six members that had been designated by the outgoing CAC.

Vice Chair Turner moved the appointments of the CAC members for 2011, including the appointment of Mr. Dobelbower as Chair. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. Report on Governance of WMATA by the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Chair Bowser recognized Mr. Alpert, Vice Chairman of the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council (RAC), to present the findings of the RAC report on the governance of WMATA. Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Alpert explained that the RAC formed a committee to examine the issue of governance in July and held a number of open meetings featuring input from former and current WMATA board members, union representatives, business leaders, and transit advocacy representatives. He said the final report, which has six broad recommendations and a number of more detailed ones, was produced only after a draft had been released for public comment.

Summarizing the recommendations, Mr. Alpert stated that the WMATA board serves an important legislative function and must include elected officials; it should set clear and high standards for its members; and it should spend more of its time looking at broader policies and objectives. He added that the board needs to act regionally, that the top staff person should be made a CEO and empowered accordingly, and that there should be a clear public input process. Drawing a distinction between the findings of the RAC and those that have been discussed in other forums, Mr. Alpert recommended that the jurisdictional veto should be retained in its current form, and that the board size and the role of the alternates should remain the same.

Chair Bowser thanked Mr. Alpert and asked for questions or comments to be saved until after the presentation under item 9.

9. Transforming Governance of WMATA: Implementation Plan and Schedule for WMATA Governance Reform Announced by Governor McDonnell, Governor O'Malley, and Mayor Gray

Chair Bowser recognized Mr. Scott, special assistant to the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation. She explained that he was representing a work group set up by both governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia to address WMATA governance.

Mr. Scott introduced two other members of the work group, Mr. Harris of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and Mr. Strauss of the District of Columbia's Department of Transportation. Mr. Scott thanked various groups for their contributions to the discussion on WMATA governance issues, and said that the governors and mayor had recently tasked their transportation executives with the development of an implementation plan and schedule for reform. He stated his intention to give a broad update on the process and to explain how the plans and schedule came together.

Mr. Scott said that the need for consensus was central to their work, as WMATA governance concerns local and regional elected representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, as well as the congressional delegation. He added that Senator Mikulski had commissioned a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on WMATA governance that is expected to be released in the middle of the year, and that the GAO's findings would need to be considered before the work group could make its final proposals. Mr. Scott said that a strong public input process would be included in their work, and that they were in the process of defining how such a process would be structured. He expressed a desire to work with the WMATA board on certain items of the implementation plan, due to their shared responsibility for the agency and the overlap with its own work on governance reform. Mr. Scott added that the work group would also be examining how to reform safety oversight at WMATA.

Chair Bowser thanked Mr. Scott. She invited Mr. Alpert back to the podium and opened the floor for questions from the members.

Mr. Erenrich said that he had reviewed some proposed legislation that would begin to codify some of the WMATA board member responsibilities for Maryland, and asked Mr. Scott if he could provide an update concerning this legislation.

Mr. Scott stated that this was a bill proposed for the Maryland General Assembly, which would establish criteria for board members, requiring specific backgrounds in areas like finance and law. He said it was important that they began to act on this issue, that it was something they would discuss with their regional colleagues, and that it would require the support of Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

Mr. Alpert said the RAC was unaware of the proposed legislation and would welcome being involved in a discussion about the bill. He added that their study had not found any correlation between professional backgrounds of board members and the quality of their decision-making.

Vice Chair Turner asked Mr. Scott how public participation would be involved in their process, given the short timeframe.

Mr. Scott replied that details were not yet defined, but that the work group was aware of the importance of public input and would keep the TPB informed on it.

Chair Bowser asked Mr. Scott how the jurisdictions would be involved in the process between January and June.

Mr. Scott replied that, as for public input, the process for seeking input from local governments was not yet defined, and that the work group would keep the TPB informed.

Rodney Roberts asked Mr. Alpert how calling WMATA's top staff person a CEO instead of a manager would improve the performance of the individual and the organization.

Mr. Alpert said that a change of title alone would not suffice, and that a change in dynamic is needed to give the CEO the freedom to come up with recommendations before receiving guidance from the board.

Mr. Mendelson said he understood the RAC's position to be that the problem with the WMATA board is not one of membership, but rather that there need to be clear boundaries around its activities. He asked Mr. Alpert if his understanding was correct.

Mr. Alpert replied affirmatively. He said that in cases the RAC had identified where the board had made decisions that led to bad outcomes, the main problem concerned the way in which the board interacted with the staff.

Mr. Wojahn said he appreciated Mr. Alpert's recommendation that board members should try out the paratransit system, but he wondered if the RAC had considered any recommendations regarding the systematic representation of historically underrepresented communities such as low-income people and people with disabilities. He also asked Mr. Scott what steps the governors were taking to obtain input from these communities.

Mr. Alpert replied that the role of WMATA's Accessibility Advisory Committee was being upgraded to report directly to the WMATA board, and he said that while such a development was not necessarily a substitute for having more direct representation, it would hopefully increase the prominence of accessibility issues.

Mr. Scott said that Metro Access is a challenge of which the work group is well aware, particularly in Maryland, which has the highest ridership. He said there were no specific recommendations concerning that constituency in terms of the governance discussion, but that the public input process of WMATA would be looked at to see if there is the appropriate level of input across the board.

Ms. Hudgins, who is currently Chair of the WMATA board, stated that the reports had provided an opportunity for change at Metro. She said the board had made several changes, the most significant of which she thought to be the implementation of a standing committee on governance, because it would provide the opportunity for consistency for certain governance issues. She said that the board had already moved toward granting a larger share of the responsibilities to the CEO, and that these were the conditions under which the new CEO had been appointed. She said that that the Accessibility Advisory Committee will report directly to the board. Ms. Hudgins said she hoped all those organizations involved in the governance discussion had already received their invitations to the first meeting of the new committee, and that she hoped to have the opportunity to share its progress with the TPB in the near future. She also expressed a desire to talk about safety and funding challenges at some point, as she expected that the financial decisions that the federal government is making will affect WMATA.

Chair Bowser thanked Ms. Hudgins, adding that she believed her to be the right person to lead WMATA through this transition period. She asked Mr. Scott to note that the jurisdictions would like to have a clearer role than just that of “stakeholders” before the executives begin to draft recommendations.

10. Briefing on Review of the January 26 Winter Storm, Including Experience of the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program

Mr. Robertson, referring to a presentation, provided a summary of the weather event on January 26, and the communications organized by MWCOG. He said elected officials, community leaders, the general public, and the media have voiced concerns about the transportation and communications coordination, emergency response, and power outages related to the winter event. He said COG staff has been listening to these concerns with the intent to improve the coordinated response to future events. He summarized several observations: the region struggled to respond to a mid-afternoon intense storm, leading to a need to strengthen the decision-making role of the regional snow call or create a virtual joint information center to exchange storm coordination information on a real-time basis; and individuals placed themselves in harm’s way without complete situational knowledge or preparedness supplies to help themselves. He said the COG Board of Directors has asked for a report at its meeting on March 9 on how to create an action plan from lessons learned on January 26 so that the region may be more prepared to handle such an event in a more coordinated fashion.

Mr. Kirby presented data that showed real-time speeds during the storm on some example corridors of the transportation system. The data showed that compared to typical rush hour speeds, on January 26 speeds were dramatically lower for an extended period of time.

Mr. Hutchinson described MATOC’s role during the winter storm. He said the MATOC team expanded their hours of coverage to ensure MATOC was functional during the entire storm event and ensuing gridlock. He said MATOC’s role of providing regional situational awareness

becomes even more critical during such an event because the individual agencies and jurisdictions are focused on the many problems within their service areas. He said it was especially helpful for the DOTs to learn how the transit providers were operating and planning during the event. He said that as the event progressed, the flow of information became as congested as the roadways. He said the flow of information was so fast that it was difficult to process each individual incident. He added that they experienced issues with electrical outages and cameras blocked by snow. He closed by saying that once people finally got off the road, snow removal operations accelerated and that by morning, the roads were relatively clear.

Mr. Jacobs reviewed the topics that will be addressed as part of planning for the future of the MATOC Program. He said MATOC performance measures, standard operating procedures, and program planning will be reviewed. He said MATOC will likely have an increased role in the preparation for regional incidents as well as participation in tabletop exercises. He said work will continue on the public information components of the MATOC website. He added that with respect to the storm on January 26, when every major piece of the transportation network begins to break down, there are very few alternative routes, making it a challenge to get around multiple incidents.

Mr. Miller of WMATA said the MATOC Steering Committee met recently and reviewed how the operating group performed during the storm event. He said the committee concluded that they followed the directives of the MOU that formed MATOC. He said that the role for MATOC is not directive, but collaborative: to provide situational awareness, make suggestions, and help member agencies to the best of its ability in the situation that existed. He said the committee members strongly recommend that MATOC be involved in the after-action review recommended by the COG Board.

Mr. Drummond asked if MWCOG has considered inviting representatives from the media and weather forecasters to participate in the regional snow discussions. He added that the media is how many citizens receive information about events.

Mr. Robertson said MWCOG works with the National Weather Service at the federal level, but that it wants to reach out to representatives from various broadcasting avenues.

Mr. Drummond said he hoped including broadcasters would reduce the incidence of unconfirmed media reports.

Mr. Mendelson said that he and many of his peers reacted very critically to what happened during and after the snow event on January 26 because the gridlock that ensued on the transportation network demonstrated that the region has made very little progress since the failures of the transportation network on September 11, 2001. He said that in the fall of 2001, TPB members vowed to fix the inability to evacuate Washington. He noted that the discussion sounds like members are talking about a snowstorm rather than the fact that we have a serious national security problem if it is impossible to efficiently evacuate the inner core. He said the snowstorm was a blueprint for how a terrorist organization would shut down the region. He said

the TPB should revisit the assumption that the goal is that it is important to evacuate the city. He said MATOC was organized to provide regional incident coordination, including coordination with some meaning of actual direction. He said that has not happened, although MATOC is still new. He noted that the snowstorm was a planned event in the sense that the forecast was fairly accurate, and that regional stakeholders knew it was going to be a challenge.

Mr. Mendelson said the TPB needs to think more critically about what it wants MATOC to do, including how the DOTs are to use the information MATOC provides. He said everyone needs to address regional cooperation and decision-making, adding that there seemed to be no coordination between the DOTs, the federal government and other decision-makers. He said it is imperative that the federal government needs to consult with the DOTs before making a decision to release a large number of workers.

Mr. Mendelson asked if Virginia has paid its contribution to the MATOC Program.

Mr. Kirby said it has not yet.

Mr. Mendelson asked if the District has paid.

Mr. Kirby said it has not yet.

Mr. Mendelson asked if Maryland has paid.

Mr. Kirby said it has.

Mr. Mendelson asked if any other entity contributes to MATOC.

Mr. Kirby said no, and added that he has been told the checks are “in the mail” from the District and Virginia.

Mr. Mendelson said the fiscal year is almost halfway over. He referred to a communication he sent Mr. Kirby and asked if Mr. Kirby could provide any information about the communication, namely about a fire that closed four blocks downtown.

Mr. Kirby asked Mr. Hutchinson to address the question.

Mr. Mendelson asked if any bridges were closed due to the event.

Mr. Hutchinson said no bridges closed.

Mr. Mendelson asked if any significant redirection of traffic occurred.

Mr. Hutchinson said no.

Mr. Mendelson asked if any traffic control officers were dispatched.

Mr. Hutchinson said traffic control officers and VMS signs were placed for the incident on the Virginia side, alerting people on I-395 coming towards the bridges.

Mr. Mendelson said motorists would likely be in the congestion already.

Mr. Hutchinson said the signage would likely have been placed the entire length of I-395/I-95 to alert people in time to select an alternate route.

Mr. Mendelson said he did not see any significant changes in operation for the better after learning from the snowstorm event.

Ms. Lehman referred to page 9 of the summary report. She asked if someone could define what an “unconfirmed media report” is, and if it includes calls from motorists stuck in traffic, or observations that could not be confirmed by the media outlet on the ground.

Mr. Hutchinson said MATOC usually tried to confirm these reports with the agencies responsible for the roadways; however during the event on January 26, the agencies were handling hundreds of incidents. He said most could confirm an incident, but did not have the personnel to confirm details of an incident.

Mr. Smith said he is not sure what the potential of MATOC is related to such a significant, debilitating event. He said he sees the value of MATOC in handling singular incidents and helping agencies coordinate around the incidents. He said he does not have the expectation that MATOC would ever be able to fully handle a large-scale, regional incident where hundreds of thousands of motorists pour onto the transportation network at the same time.

Mr. Elrich asked if any analysis had been conducted as to whether it is even possible to evacuate the inner core in a reasonable manner. He said he had doubts that it is possible.

Mr. Kirby said Mr. Smith was on point when he said MATOC was not designed to clear a situation resulting from a total transportation network breakdown. He said MATOC is designed to deal with isolated incidents that have good alternative routes. He said the only way to reduce impacts from a large scale breakdown of the network is to provide a lot of advance information and advise people not to get on the road. He added that sometimes cautionary guidance might be given and then the event may turn out not to be severe, but such guidance would help ensure that the events of January 26 would not happen again.

Mr. Elrich said many people tend to be hesitant of the weather forecasts, because a jurisdiction receives a lot of criticism when it closed schools for an event that did not materialize. He reiterated that the region does not have the road capacity to evacuate the inner core, and said he is skeptical if it could be done in an unplanned emergency given the roads available outside the District. He said perhaps we should not tell people we can do things that we cannot possibly do.

Mr. Kirby said there are certain things that can be done and referenced the fact that Fairfax County Public Schools closed the schools on January 26 based on meteorological information it received the evening before. He said the decision could have been criticized if the weather event has not materialized, but that it ended up being an enormously beneficial decision.

Mr. Donley said January 26 was a foreseeable event based on the accurate forecast. He said MATOC is a wonderful resource to provide situational awareness, but that information cannot help if the region is at total gridlock. He said the region needs to change its way of thinking, and consider more efforts to shelter in place. He said the natural thinking during any type of major event is to go home, which was the wrong response in this case. He said a paradigm shift needs to occur and that officials should not be afraid to make a recommendations even though it might run counter to the natural response to the event.

Ms. Clay said that, as an employee of the federal government, she has a telework agreement in place. She said that instead of relying on the federal government to make collaborative decisions as to when to release its workers, perhaps the TPB could communicate to the federal government and other employers about telework and liberal leave options for certain scenarios.

Chair Bowser said the TPB must focus as a body on what is realistic for MATOC to accomplish during such an event. She said it is important to examine all avenues for disseminating information about regional incidents. She said that it is more important to focus on regional coordination of agencies, particularly the DOTs. She said that it is necessary to be more creative in using the existing capacity of the roadways during significant events. She said she is encouraged that the COG Board will have a conversation at its meeting on March 9; she asked that the TPB be informed of this conversation.

11. Briefing on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2011 Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)

Mr. Austin summarized the proposed significant changes to the region's long-range transportation plan. Referring to a PowerPoint Presentation, he briefly described the six projects that have been identified as significant: (1) H Street, NW Peak Period Bus-Only Lane from 17th Street and New York Avenue in the District, (2) Crystal City-Potomac Yard Streetcar in Arlington County, (3) I-395/I-95 HOV and HOT lanes from 2 miles north of I-495 to VA 610 in Virginia, (4) I-395 HOV Lanes Reversible Ramp from/to Seminary Road in Virginia, (5) Widening of US 1 from VA 235 South to VA 611 in Virginia, and finally (6) Widening I-66 General Purpose/HOV Lanes from US 15 to US 29 in Virginia. He explained that a comprehensive air quality conformity table, which contains all of the projects in the plan, is available on the web. He stated that information on all of these project submissions was released for public comment on February 10, and that the public comment period will close March 12. He added that the TPB will be asked to approve the project submissions, along with a draft scope of work for air quality conformity assessment, at its March meeting. He said that modeling and air quality conformity analysis will then be conducted, after which another public comment

period will begin on October 13 and extend through November 13. He said the projects would be brought before the TPB for final approval at its November meeting.

12. Briefing on Draft Scope of Work for Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2011 CLRP

Ms. Posey summarized changes from the 2010 analysis in the draft scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis, which was included in the mailout. Referring to page 2, she said that the new travel demand model, which includes 3722 transportation analysis zones and a more detailed street base, would be used for the analysis. She added that there is an update to the land activity files, and that there will be updates from the Baltimore region added to the analysis. She said that the emissions assessment would no longer show a comparison to the 1-hour ozone budget for the ozone pollutants, and would instead adhere to the 8-hour 2008 reasonable further progress budgets. Referring to page 9, she said that the conformity regulations state that any project that is regionally significant must be in conformity analysis before it can go into the plan or TIP. She said that the new street base and area system requires revisions to the definition of what is regionally significant, and pointed to the memo at the end of the work scope for further information on the changes that have been proposed. She mentioned that the schedule on page 7 is the same one that Mr. Austin had highlighted under the prior agenda item.

Chair Bowser asked for confirmation that this item would be on the agenda for March.

Ms. Posey provided confirmation.

13. Briefing on Draft FY 2012 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)

Mr. Ramfos, referring to the FY 2012 draft Commuter Connections program which was provided in the mailout and to a PowerPoint Presentation, summarized new components of the work program. He said that a geographical map was added to reflect updates to the coverage area, and that a Guaranteed Ride Home program was launched this past year to include the Baltimore region and St. Mary's County. He also said that the Car-Free Day Steering Committee had been added to the structure chart because it is a permanent working group. He mentioned that development will begin on a regional ride-sharing mobile application that will be available to commuters on their smart phones, and said this application would be based off of regional TDM software. He stated that the Pool Rewards carpool incentive program, which was introduced last year, would continue, and that a 2010 Commuter Connections State of the Commute report would be produced. With regard to funding, he said that all three state DOTs have made firm commitments to the FY 2012 Commuter Connections Program, which was reviewed by the Commuter Connections Subcommittee and the TPB Technical Committee. He said that the Draft FY 2012 Commuter Connections Work Program was released for public comment on February 10, and that this would be an item for approval before the TPB at its March meeting.

Chair Bowser asked if all the TPB jurisdictions have agreed to participate.

Mr. Ramfos replied that the Commuter Connections Subcommittee approved the program in January, and this approval signifies that all jurisdictions have agreed to participate.

14. Briefing on Draft FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Kirby, referring to a handout of a PowerPoint Presentation, highlighted the significant changes to work activities for FY 2012. He explained that the overall budget level is assumed to be the same as it was for FY 2011, and that there are no proposed changes in the budget levels of current work activities. He said that a technical assistance project is proposed as a follow-up from the WMATA priority corridor network briefing the TPB received last month. He also said that three components have been identified in the regional studies work activity: to support the regional priority plan development, to support the COG Region Forward activities, and to prepare grant applications for USDOT programs as directed by the TPB.

He said the UPWP would be brought before the TPB at its March meeting for final approval, and explained that if there are any USDOT budgetary changes that affect MPO funding, an amendment will be brought back to the TPB in June or July to reflect the final federal budget situation.

NOTICE ITEM

15. Notice of Proposed Amendment to the 2010 CLRP to Modify the I-95/35 HOV/HOT Lanes project and Add a Ramp from the HOV Lanes of I-395 to Seminary Road as Requested by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Kirby said that this notice item is a proposed amendment to the 2010 CLRP, which was adopted in November. He said this is a project in the 2011 CLRP submissions that VDOT has advanced, and would be done on a relatively short timeframe. He explained that Mr. Austin in Item 11 reviewed the project submission from the full annual update of the 2011 plan, which will not be complete until November. He said VDOT has a very tight schedule for doing the environmental work for these two projects. As a result, he said VDOT would prefer to do a conformity assessment of this amendment to the 2010 CLRP in order to have the conformity results by July to begin the environmental work on the project as soon as possible. He confirmed that nothing else would change relative to the 2010 plan and that these projects would be included in the 2011 CLRP amendment as well.

16. Other Business

There was no other business brought before the TPB.

17. Adjourn

Chair Bowser adjourned the meeting at 2:02pm.