National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

February 14, 2008

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the January 16th TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the January 16tth TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the February 20th TPB agenda.

Attachments

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY BOARD
2100 CLARENDON BOULEVARD, SUITE 300
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201-5406
(703) 228-3130 • FAX (703) 228-7430
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AUBRYŃ BEDNAR
ACTING CLERK TO
THE COUNTY BOARD

MEMBERS
J. WALTER TEJADA
CHAIRMAN
BARBARA A. FAVOLA
VICE CHAIRMAN
JAY FISETTE
MARY HUGHES HYNES
CHRISTOPHER ZIMMERMAN

February 4, 2008

Michael Knapp
Chairman, COG Board of Directors
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Dear Mike and Phil,

First, congratulations on your elections as chair of the COG Board and Transportation Planning Board respectively.

We are writing to ask that you convene a meeting of senior level public officials from the region's core jurisdictions, both elected and appointed, to discuss bike sharing.

In recent months, we have become aware that at least two jurisdictions, the District of Columbia and Arlington, have developed plans for bike sharing. These plans use different systems, and are not compatible. We have attached a copy of a recent Washington Business Journal article that briefly describes these plans. It is our view that most readers of this article will wonder why there is not a more coordinated regional approach to this effort.

We very much appreciate the District's early efforts to move forward on bike sharing, and we similarly respect the staff work done in Arlington – yet we remain concerned that the two systems are not compatible. While there has been communication at the staff level, we feel the situation calls for a higher level of involvement at this time.

It is our hope that COG and TPB, both committed to regionalism and regional coordination, can convene a meeting of the necessary senior public officials to allow a full discussion of the current plans, the status of those plans, and what, if any, opportunity exists for future compatibility of bike sharing programs.

We personally believe that bike sharing has the potential to succeed, particularly in the core of the region, but it may be very important that early plans are coordinated to maximize the potential of that success. Clearly, we see the core to include the District of Columbia, Arlington, and Alexandria – and it is possible that some portions of Montgomery County and Falls Church could also benefit in the early stages. As we know, some large cities outside the United States, particularly in Europe, have seen great success with large bike sharing efforts in recent years.

Please contact either of us should you need any further information. We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jay Fisette
Member, COG Board
Member, Arlington County Board

Chris Zimmerman
Member, TPB
Member, Arlington County Board

cc: Ron Carlee, Arlington County Manager
Dan Tangherlini, City Administrator, District of Columbia
Jim Hartmann, Alexandria City Manager
David Robertson, COG Executive Director

Washington Business Journal - January 28, 2008
http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2008/01/28/story10.html

WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Friday, January 25, 2008

District hits streets with new bicycle rental program

Washington Business Journal - by Vandana Sinha Staff Reporter

Joanne S. Lawton

Riding a trend: Jim Sebastian, the District's manager of bike programs, is ready to roll with a bike-rental program that will park more than 100 bikes throughout the downtown area beginning in March.

View Larger

D.C. transportation officials are debuting this spring a high-tech commuting option that would return people to the transit of yore, while cutting the number of wheels on the city's gridlocked roads in half.

In March, the District plans to be the country's first city to launch SmartBike, an automated bike rental system that gives car-weary commuters another option.

The program is starting with 120 rental bikes parked downtown at 10 sensor-powered stations from Georgetown to Chinatown.

Some people, however, say the number of bikes is too low compared with the expected demand and similar rollouts worldwide.

Paris launched its own version of the program last summer with nearly 10,700 bikes and 750 racks.

Neighboring Arlington County hopes to start its own bike-sharing system this spring with more than 120 bikes. Other communities, including Bethesda and Alexandria, are looking into the idea.

D.C. transportation officials say the bikes they put out in March are merely the first-round introductions of the red, four-speed SmartBikes. Within a year, depending on ridership, they plan to expand the number of bikes and the coverage areas.

"At this point, we're calling it a pilot program," said Jim Sebastian, a manager of bike and pedestrian programs at D.C.'s Department of Transportation. "If we really want to have an impact on congestion and really want to have people riding bicycles in the city, then we need more."

Sebastian had inserted the rental-bike idea, initially a request for 50 bikes citywide, into a larger bus shelter advertising contract signed with Clear Channel Adshel in 2005, well before a rental bike appeared on Paris parkways.

But since then, D.C. has been left in the dust as Paris became the concept's front-runner, doubling its numbers in six months to 20,600 bikes and 1,400 racks. Sweden and Barcelona, Spain, have also broken from the pack, expanding to 2,125 bikes in nearly 200 locations and 6,000 bikes at 400 locations, respectively.

According to the contract terms, SmartBikes could have started zipping through D.C. last summer. Delays pushed the launch date to the fall, but Clear Channel executives said only one station would have opened then and opted instead to unveil all 10 stations in March.

Getting off the ground

Even with their sparse numbers, D.C. officials hope the SmartBikes will slash average commuting times and offer shortcuts around Metro's labyrinth of lines.

The precise locations of the 10 kiosks have not been determined yet, but they will be sprinkled on high-traffic street corners with publicly owned space and will be no more than a couple of miles from another bike station.

Paying an annual $39 fee, bikers would subscribe online to the service and get a card they could swipe at an automated machine near each kiosk to rent and return bikes.

After a yet-to-be-determined number of months, bikers would also fork over $1 to $2 per hour of use, paying with their credit cards. **Zipcar** customers may get a discount if the city strikes a deal with the company.

The automated machine shows when and where each bike is returned. Late or missing bikes would earn the subscriber hefty fines, perhaps up to the cost of a replacement bike.

Clear Channel is paying the roughly $360,000 annual bills to kick off and steer the SmartBike program for the next two decades, which means the annual fees and penalty payments head directly into the D.C. government coffers.

Location, location, location

The city's most tiring, and still ongoing, job in laying SmartBike's groundwork: finding its pit stops.

Some selections were clear from an informal online poll that was offered by the Transportation Department last summer and elicited 100 responses.

The preferred locations include Dupont Circle, Georgetown, U Street NW and Gallery Place. Some favorites, bagging at least a quarter of the votes, such as Eastern Market and Union Station haven't yet made the cut because of their distance. Other areas, such as McPherson Square and around **Howard University** may win stations, even though they had little support in the poll.

The city is putting the stops near downtown Metro stations to avoid breathless rides for customers who find one 12-bike rack too full when they return a bike and then must go to the next one, Sebastian said

"If we expand it," he said, "there will be no neighborhoods left out."

City and Clear Channel officials are also grappling with unanticipated charges of up to $21,000 to install meters that measure the electricity consumption at each bike station.

They note that the bike-sharing program is a tiny sliver of a larger contract with Clear Channel, which was called on to redesign, erect and sell advertising for hundreds of new bus shelters citywide, providing the District with more than $125 million in revenue over 20 years.

The bike project hit another roadblock when Clear Channel had trouble filling its coordinator position, according to the discussion at a Transportation Department meeting last summer. The company, however, disputes that point, saying the job search posed no difficulty.

"We had our person in place," said Martina Schmidt, president of Clear Channel Adshel. "The program was never without leadership."

Selling the project

In a city where little more than 1 percent of people commute on bikes, it is difficult to determine what D.C.'s rate of adoption might be. By contrast, in European cities such as Amsterdam, more than half of commuters park at bike racks.

"Based on the conversations we've had with cyclists and members and knowing what's keeping people from riding, distance is one of those issues," said Eric Gilliland, executive director of the 7,000-member **Washington Area Bicyclist Association**, which is working on a marketing plan with Clear Channel. "If we roll out a system in good time and provide proper infrastructure on the road, and market the program well, it's going to be a great success."

Success also depends on the planned build-out of bike lanes between each SmartBike station, he said. The city has created 30 miles of new bike lanes in the last six years, but 50 miles remain to be finished by 2010.

The local bicyclist association, already discussing the idea with Alexandria, hopes SmartBikes spread to neighboring cities.

Bethesda is studying the concept to further green up its business district. And this spring Arlington County hopes to introduce a cell-phone-based bike rental system in the Ballston-Rosslyn corridor.

"It's much lower technology, but because of that, we're able to get many more bikes onto the streets," said Paul DeMaio, founder of **MetroBike LLC** and a consultant for Arlington County, which received a $220,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

He said the county wants to link up with Zipcar, positioning its bike racks around the orange poles that signify the car rental system's parking spots.

Arlington County had approached Clear Channel to run its program, but the company said it includes SmartBike services only in advertising contracts that generate enough revenue to pay for the service. Arlington has since narrowed its vendor list to two German companies, Call-a-Bike and NextBike.

"It won't meet everyone's needs all the time, and it's certainly not meant to," DeMaio said. "It's an old form of transportation, but used in a new way."

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National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 2008

To: Transportation Planning Board

From: Ronald F. Kirby RFK
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

Re: Review of National Legislative Developments Affecting Transportation

On January 16 the TPB was briefed on the final report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. This commission is one of two congressionally appointed commissions charged with examining current conditions and future needs of the nation's surface transportation system and providing recommendations for the next transportation bill reauthorization. The second commission, the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, just issued its interim report on February 1st regarding its recommendations on transportation financing alternatives. While the report does not offer specific recommendations, it does provide an assessment of the problems with the current transportation funding system. The main problems highlighted are: insufficient revenue, funding mechanisms are not tied to demand, and the current funding approach is not driven toward cost effectiveness. The final report of the commission is expected in early 2009 and will include greater detail on alternatives to currently insufficient funding mechanisms, such as changes to the fuel tax and direct user charges.

Another legislative development relevant to the transportation sector is the advancement of the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act on December 5, 2007. This bill is the first of its kind to be voted out of committee and sent to the full Senate by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The bill sets a declining cap on U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases, achieving reductions below 2005 levels of around 70 percent by 2050. The primary mechanism for achieving these reductions is a cap-and-trade program administered by the EPA. From within the COG region, two senators sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senators Warner (VA) and Cardin (MD), both of whom voted in favor of advancing the bill. There are several provisions that affect the transportation sector specifically and a few that have the potential to affect the operations of MPOs, summarized below.

In general, the Climate Security Act affects transportation development and users indirectly in three basic ways:

1. The allocation and prescribed use of emissions allowances;
2. The distribution of auction revenue from the sale of allowances; and
3. Emissions reductions mandates

First, the bill annually distributes, and initially gives for free, a set number of emissions allowances to states, covered facilities and industries that are large emitters (such as electricity producers and petroleum importers), a new Climate Change Credit Corporation, and a few others. By allocating emissions allowances to large emitters, emissions reductions from the transportation sector would be achieved upstream by regulating fuel producers and importers rather than end-users. This would mean that drivers would not need to account for their carbon emissions, but a fuel producer, such as Exxon, would have to buy additional emissions allowances or further reduce the carbon intensity of their fuel.

Transportation development is also indirectly affected by the bill according to prescriptions on how emissions allowances can be used by states. States could generally be allocated up to ten percent of the total annual allowances. Each state would then be restricted in their use of the allowances (or proceeds from the sales of the allowances) to a set of activities, including public transportation improvements and VMT reduction. Another one percent of the total allowances (or proceeds from the sale of the allowances) would be distributed to the states using the Interstate and National Highway System formula, which could be used strictly for mass transit investments, including transit system operating costs, increasing ridership, new starts, system expansion, and energy efficiency. The state would be required to geographically distribute 80% of the funds: 60% to urban areas and 20% to rural areas. This provision was proposed and accepted under an amendment by Senator Cardin.

Another aspect of the bill that can affect the transportation sector is the annual auction of emissions allowances. The free allowances described above are not likely to be sufficient for all entities receiving them, therefore, a large and annually rising percentage of emissions allowances are distributed to the Climate Change Credit Corporation for auction. The revenue from the auctions can then be used for predefined programs.

Transportation-related programs are as follows:

- 3% of auction proceeds go to the development and use of cellulosic biofuel
- 6.24% of auction proceeds go to developing advanced technology vehicles (electric, hybrid, plug-in hybrid, fuel cell, or advanced diesel vehicles that are 125% more efficient on an energy equivalent basis than similar vehicles).
- 2% of auction proceeds go to early stage, higher risk energy research, which includes vehicle and fuel technologies

The third and final indirect way in which the Climate Security Act affects the transportation sector is through a Low Carbon Fuels Standard, which mandates the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions intensity of fuel by 10% by 2020 from a 2008 baseline, rather than limiting greenhouse gas emissions from transportation use directly.

It is uncertain that this act will progress beyond its current status, but if it does there are additional amendments that could be introduced or re-introduced in the future that could affect transportation and the operation of MPOs. Among them are additional amendments from Senator Cardin. The first is a possible addition to the current 1% mass transit allowance allocation that would provide additional funding for which MPOs could be eligible. Another Cardin amendment seeks funding for EPA to monitor, enforce, and administer a cap on carbon dioxide. According to Cardin's staff, MPOs could likely assist the EPA in this effort, similarly to their role in air quality conformity monitoring.

The bill also addresses the fact that "additional policies external to a cap-and-trade program may be required…with respect to the transportation sector, where reducing greenhouse gas emissions requires changes in the vehicle, in the fuels, and in consumer behavior." It is possible that the link between transportation and climate change could manifest in the coinciding development of the transportation reauthorization bill and the advancement of this climate change bill, just as air quality and transportation became intertwined through the connection between ISTEA and the Clean Air Amendments of 1990.

The Path Forward: Funding and Financing Our Surface Transportation System

Interim Report of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission

February 2008

National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission

Commissioners

- Chair: Robert Atkinson, President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation
- Vice-Chair: Martin Shultz, Vice President, Government Affairs, Pinnacle West Capital Corporation
- Donald F. Carmody, Director, Two Rivers Financial Group
- Jeffrey C. Crowe, Chairman of the Board of Landstar System, Inc.
- Mark Florian, Managing Director, Goldman, Sachs & Company
- Bryan Grote, Principal, Mercator Advisors LLC
- Bill Kennedy, County Commissioner, Yellowstone County, Montana
- Mike Krusee, Representative, Texas House of Representatives
- Craig Lentzsch, Vice Chairman of the American Bus Association
- Dana Levenson, Managing Director and Head of North American Infrastructure, The Royal Bank of Scotland
- Adrian Moore, Vice President for Research, Reason Foundation
- Kathy Ruffalo-Farnsworth, Government Affairs Consultant, Ruffalo and Associates, LLC.
- Elliot Sander, Executive Director and CEO, New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Zack Scrivner, City Council Member, Bakersfield, California
- Geoffrey S. Yarema, Partner, Nossaman Guthner Knox & Elliott LLP

More information on the Finance Commission and the commissioners is available at http://financecommission.dot.gov/

Comments on this interim report should be submitted in writing to Jack Wells, Commission Staff Director / Designated Federal Official, at Jack.Wells@dot.gov

Synopsis

If American travelers from three decades ago were suddenly transported to the present day, they would be aghast at the condition of our national surface transportation system, particularly by the chronic congestion and delays. If we are to ensure that American travelers three decades hence do not look back with longing on how "good" our system was in 2008, and if we are to remain competitive in a global economy, we must thoroughly re-assess the current approach to funding surface transportation infrastructure.

With this goal in mind, the U.S. Congress established the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission (the "Financing Commission" as authorized in section 11142 of SAFETEA-LU) to analyze options and recommend changes for federal policy makers to consider in funding the system.

In addition to the Financing Commission, Congress directed the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission (the "Policy Commission" as authorized in section 1909(b) of SAFETEA-LU) to study the current condition and future needs of the surface transportation system and offer recommendations for a new vision, goals, policies and programs to guide the future federal role. We expect the recently released report of the Policy Commission, as well as the analyses of many stakeholders, to spark a lively debate that will inform Congress and our work.[1] Over the next year we will craft specific recommendations for funding and financing a federal role based on our own work, the Policy Commission's recommendations and the debate that follows.

In this, our interim report, we present the mandate and the goals of the Financing Commission and outline how we plan to meet those goals. We explain how we currently view the transportation infrastructure funding problem and how we plan to approach our mandate, as well as to solicit feedback on our preliminary thinking.

Our starting point is specifying the scope of the funding problem as we initially see it and the consequences of the problem for mobility, the economy, and our quality of life. In brief, we perceive the current surface transportation funding approach as suffering from three main problems:

- Revenue is insufficient to maintain the national network and build needed improvements to the system;
- Current funding mechanisms and levels of revenue are not closely linked to use of the transportation system, allowing demand and costs to grow faster than revenue; and
- Critical components of the current approach to investing transportation revenue are not structurally driven toward cost effectiveness, dissipating the effectiveness of existing revenue.

We provide in this report the criteria by which we plan to evaluate various funding sources and financing techniques. We describe the broader surface transportation system issues and challenges that provide the context for examining possible funding recommendations. And we sincerely invite stakeholder feedback on all aspects of our approach in order to help us develop constructive and specific recommendations that will support our nation's future transportation needs.

Finally we identify some preliminary observations and invite comment on them as well. In brief:

- System demands are outpacing investment;
- System maintenance costs are competing with necessary expansion of the system;
- The fuel tax, which has been the key federal funding source for our system, is no longer sufficient at current rates;
- More direct user charges should be explored; and
- We need not only more investment in our system, but more intelligent investment complemented by better operation of the system.

Our challenge is to examine carefully all options and develop recommendations for funding the vision, goals, policies and programs suggested by the Policy Commission and others. We invite all stakeholders to help us meet this challenge by providing comments and suggestions on this interim report.

S I X

Preliminary Observations

As the Financing Commission looks ahead to developing recommendations for Congress and the Executive Branch, certain realities will guide our thinking. At this early stage, we identify some preliminary observations. We invite comment on these and other observations we will make as we continue to research and develop recommendations.

- **System demands are outpacing investment.** Given reasonable projections of system use, the current levels of investment from federal, state and local governments will be insufficient to meet demand.
- **System maintenance can be so costly and necessary that it becomes difficult to address necessary expansion of the system.** Current investment levels are not sufficient to adequately maintain the system and make needed cost-beneficial improvements. An increasing share of limited transportation funding necessarily is being used to maintain aging systems. This has led to modest improvements in highway and public transportation conditions in recent years, but still left significant lane miles of urban and rural roads in poor condition. As states and localities have allocated larger and larger shares of their transportation funds to maintenance, they have increasingly sacrificed needed capacity enhancements. Furthermore, as major deferred capital rehabilitation comes due, even the maintenance funding will fall well short of required levels.
- **The fuel tax, which has been the key federal funding source for our system, is no longer sufficient at current rates.** The revenues raised through the federal fuel tax at current levels cannot support many of the visions that exist for the federal contribution to total investment in the system. While an increase in the federal fuel tax could help address the investment shortfall in the near term, the political will and public acceptance required for even modest

increases may be lacking. Furthermore, a funding approach that relies principally on fuel consumption may not be a sustainable strategy in the long run. As a result, additional approaches should be explored.

- **More direct user charges should be explored.** While more funding is needed at all levels of government—regardless of the source—funding more of the system costs through direct user charges, rather than indirect fees such as the fuel tax or general revenues, can encourage more efficient use of system capacity. This behavioral change could reduce the need to build new capacity and therefore reduce the level of funding required in certain areas. Efficient system use also reduces negative externalities such as vehicle greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Transit users pay their user charges directly; it would be better if road users did as well. New technologies appear to enable new tools that make direct user charges easier to administer and more user-friendly.
- **We need not only more investment in our system, but more intelligent investment complemented by better system operations.** We can improve the utilization of current capacity through better incentives for optimal system operation. Investment decision-making should be based more on life-cycle cost-benefit analysis and other measures of performance outcomes.

After World War II, America's political leaders worked together to craft and implement a vision and funding approach that led to the world's best surface transportation system. Although the challenges and opportunities are very different today, they will require an equal if not greater commitment and vision to meet them.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region

January 25, 2008

Mr. Herbert L. Pegram
Grant Coordinator
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Pegram:

I am pleased to submit the enclosed memorandum on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), in response to your request for additional information about our application for funding through the 2008 Multimodal Planning Grants Program. We appreciate being selected to participate in this second phase of the application process and welcome the opportunity to provide more details about our program and the specific goals we are confident we can accomplish with additional resources.

If you have any questions, please contact Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning for COG, at (202)962-3310 or rkirby@mwcog.org.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely yours,

David Robertson
Executive Director

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National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Hebert Pegram, Grant Coordinator
Virginia Department of Transportation

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

SUBJECT: Additional materials for Virginia Multimodal Planning Grant application

DATE: January 25, 2008

We appreciate the opportunity to apply for funding from the 2008 Virginia Multimodal Planning Grant Program. We believe that the projects funded through our 2007 multimodal grant, which are currently underway, will yield a number of beneficial and innovative products.

In response to your email message of January 10, 2008, this memorandum provides additional information about our current grant request, including a scope of work, schedule and cost estimate.

As stated in our Grant Letter of Intent from November 29, 2008, we are seeking $100,000 in funding for the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). However, since November, the TLC program has continued to evolve and this memorandum reflects the modified direction that we wish to take with this grant application.

In our Grant Letter of Intent, we indicated that using the new VDOT grant, we would seek to fund five projects at a level of $20,000 each. However, in a recent solicitation for projects, we received only four applications from Northern Virginia, two of which we intend to fund directly through our Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Although we could seek funding for the two remaining Virginia applications from your office, we believe a new VDOT grant could be better used to expand our technical assistance program later this year.

In particular, we would like to make more funding available to individual projects. While our TLC technical assistance program was lauded in its pilot round, it has been noted that the limited budgets and schedules could in some cases discourage applications for strong projects that require additional funding, more time for community involvement or other needs. In other cases, worthy projects could be funded for less than $20,000. We believe that the effectiveness of projects could be optimized by offering some funding flexibility to applicants. We are specifically proposing to offer a range of funding between $10,000 and $60,000. This funding range has been included in our draft UPWP for FY2009, which would apply to TLC projects throughout the Metropolitan Washington Region that will funded directly through our work program. We are also proposing to apply this funding range to those Northern Virginia projects that will be funded through the VDOT Multimodal Planning Grant Program.

The attached scope of work reflects this modification to our original request.

We appreciate your continued consideration and support.

Application for Funding from The 2008 VDOT Multimodal Planning Grant Program

For the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program

Background

The TPB's Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program addresses regional challenges related to linking transportation and land use in an effort to reduce congestion and improve quality of life. TPB studies have indicated that locating jobs and housing closer together, promoting development closer to transit stations, and improving multimodal transportation options can have a positive impact on future transportation conditions in the Washington Region. However, the TPB's research and outreach activities have also shown that the success of these kinds of land-use and transportation changes is often contingent upon numerous local planning decisions made at the local level. By providing technical assistance to community-level planning efforts, the TLC Program facilitates proactive, innovative solutions to local challenges, and shares success stories and proven tools with local leaders, professional planning staff and other stakeholders throughout the region.

Established in January 2007, the TLC Program currently includes two components: 1) consultant-provided technical assistance to local jurisdictions and 2) the web-based TLC Clearinghouse (www.mwcorg.org/tlc), which facilitates regional knowledge-sharing. TLC technical assistance projects use pre-qualified consultants and provide up to $20,000 to recipients who are member jurisdictions of the TPB. Projects may include a range of services, such as public participation and visualization; streetscape design and roadway standards; pedestrian and bicycle planning; public space/aesthetics; mixed-use market analysis; transit demand analysis; stakeholder identification and cooperation; zoning and design standards revisions; parking management planning; and other services.

Five TLC technical assistance projects—two of which were in Virginia— were funded during the program's pilot phase, January-June 2007. In July of 2007, the TPB received $100,000 from the Virginia Multimodal Grant Program to fund an additional five projects in Virginia. Those projects are currently underway.

Scope of Work

The TPB will use funding from the 2008 Virginia Multimodal Planning Grants Program to implement TLC technical assistance projects in Northern Virginia that would not otherwise receive funding. The projects will be selected from a pool of applications that the TPB expects to receive in response to a new solicitation for TLC projects that will be issued in the final months of 2008 (mid- FY2009).

Unlike previous TLC projects that were each funded at $20,000, the TPB in FY2009 plans to implement projects with different levels of funding. Applicants will be offered a funding range between $10,000 and $60,000.

The TPB will work with VDOT in selecting appropriate projects receiving funding through the Multimodal Planning Grants Program.

We anticipate that the types of TLC technical assistance projects in 2008 will be consistent with the track record of successful projects from 2007. Those projects covered a wide range of issues, including pedestrian safety, urban roadway design standards, traffic flow near transit stations, and forthcoming changes under the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closing) program. Information on the pilot projects can be found at www.mwcog.org/tlc. The website also includes information on the projects funded through the Virginia Multimodal Grant program that are currently underway.

Across the region, TLC projects have provided targeted assistance to communities that are looking to enhance multimodal travel alternatives, mitigate or enhance the transportation impacts of land use shifts, and improve mobility and accessibility. The value of the grant money is maximized by the fact that the TPB has already initiated the TLC program and can manage the assistance from the regional level. This allows for the regionwide sharing of lessons learned and best practices through the TPB-funded TLC Clearinghouse while ensuring that all Virginia grant money goes directly to providing technical assistance in TPB Virginia jurisdictions. Administration of the technical assistance program will be conducted by the TPB and its staff using TPB funds.

Although end-products vary among the planning projects, the TPB does require a project report from each consultant team providing technical assistance. These reports are posted on the TLC website. TPB staff will maintain contact with the lead local agency for each project to track and encourage implementation. However, it should be emphasized that the end-products should not be viewed simply as discrete reports. Rather, the projects funded through the TLC program are designed to fit into more extensive planning activities and in many cases, the “products” should be seen as the relationships that are enhanced when stakeholders are convened through a TLC project, or the issues and opportunities that are clarified and highlighted through focused, short-term technical assistance.

Schedule

June 2008	Grant received and UPWP amended.
October 2008	Solicitation for new round of TLC projects
December 2008	Projects selected
January-June 2009	Projects implemented

Cost Estimate

The TPB is seeking a total of $100,000 from the 2008 VDOT Multimodal Planning Grants Program to fund individual TLC technical assistance projects in Northern Virginia.

Individual project funding levels may vary between $10,000 and $60,000. Once a new round of project applications is received toward the end of calendar year 2008, representatives of the VDOT Multimodal Grants Program would be asked to assist in the selection of projects to be funded. The actual number of projects selected would depend upon the number, type and proposed funding levels in the project applications.

Contact

John Swanson, jswanson@mwcog.org, 202-962-3295

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region

January 25, 2008

Mr. Herbert Pegram
Grant Coordinator
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Pegram:

I am writing you today in support of the application by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) for funding through the 2008 Multimodal Planning Grants Program.

The TPB's Transportation/Land-Use Connections Program, for which the grant is requested, has already provided many benefits for the Washington Region, including the member jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. The technical assistance provided by the program catalyzes and enhances local planning efforts, making it easier for localities in the region to address the challenges of coordinating land-use and transportation.

As a TPB Vice-Chair and as a City Councilmember of a Northern Virginia jurisdiction in which a TLC project funded by the 2007 Multimodal Planning Grants Program is currently underway, I strongly support this COG/TPB initiative, and hope that another VDOT grant will enable additional TLC projects in Northern Virginia to move forward.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this application, which has my full endorsement.

Sincerely,

David Snyder
Falls Church City Councilmember
TPB Vice-Chair

777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20002-4290
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MTA Maryland

MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Martin O'Malley, Governor • Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
John D. Porcari, Secretary • Paul J. Wiedefeld, Administrator

January 14, 2008

Ms. Catherine Hudgins
Chair
National Capital Region Transportation
Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington DC 20002-4290

Dear Ms. Hudgins:

Thank you for requesting the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) support for a project to develop a web-based regional clearinghouse with information about transportation options in the Washington region for people with disabilities, older adults and low-income commuters. The MTA is pleased to support the initial development of the project with a one-time contribution of $11,000.

MTA's contribution, as I understand it, will go toward the design and development of a website and searchable database, customer phone support and marketing. The amount requested is a share of the 20 percent local match needed to support the project.

We believe the clearinghouse will benefit citizens of the region by making information about transportation options more available. It is our hope that once development of the clearinghouse is underway you will be able to work with the local stakeholders, such as the human services agencies, to obtain on-going funding for this effort.

Once the project has been approved, please contact Ms. Latrina Trotman, MTA's Chief of Statewide Programs, at 410-767-7272, to coordinate transfer of the funds. Best wishes for a successful project.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Wiedefeld

Paul J. Wiedefeld
Administrator

cc: Mr. Lenny Howard, Manager of Statewide Planning, Office of Planning, MTA
Ms. Heather Murphy, Deputy Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
Ms. Diane Ratcliff, Director, Office of Planning, MTA
Ms. Latrina Trotman, Chief of Statewide Programs, MTA

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January 15, 2008

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capital Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4290

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

This letter is in response to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) request for funding from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for the Proposed Regional Clearinghouse Project.

At the request of the Virginia General Assembly, the Department is already engaged in an effort to develop a statewide web-based information clearinghouse to assist people with disabilities. The effort is a strategic partnership that will leverage existing resources and deliver comprehensive information to disabled citizens above and beyond transportation options. The first phase of this effort is scheduled for completion by July 1, 2008. To eliminate any duplication of services, DRPT will develop this resource first and evaluate its use before considering an investment in any other systems.

Please contact Mr. Corey Hill, Chief of Transit and Congestion Management, at (804) 786-4443 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Matt O. T

Matthew O. Tucker
Director

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item 5

February 14, 2008

To: Transportation Planning Board

From: Catherine Hudgins, Chair, TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee

Subject: AFA Comments on Draft 2008 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan

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The Access for All Advisory (AFA) Committee is submitting the following comments to the TPB regarding the significant changes for the Draft 2008 Financially Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) based on discussions at the January 24, 2008 AFA meeting, recent AFA focus areas and reports.

Specific Comments on Proposed New Projects in the CLRP

The AFA is concerned that transit is losing out to single-occupancy vehicle capacity in the proposed changes to the Virginia High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane projects.

- The AFA expressed concerns about the proposed addition of a general purpose auxiliary lane to the I-495 Capital Beltway HOV-HOT Lanes project and the proposed Transit Plan Revisions for the I-95/395 HOV-HOT Lanes project that would reduce the number of additional buses purchased from 184 to 76. The AFA is concerned that the revised Transit Plan invests less in bus service, in lieu of VRE capital improvements, and the AFA has recommended that community bus service be an integral part of HOT lane projects.
- The AFA feels that HOT Lane projects should have the appropriate balance between bus service and single occupancy vehicle capacity to offset potential equity concerns.
- The AFA urges the Virginia Department of Transportation to carefully negotiate any changes to the HOT Lane projects with private partners that may reduce the potential benefits and increase the negative impacts of the project on low-income communities, minority communities and persons with disabilities.

WMATA, Arlington and Fairfax Counties should involve persons with disabilities in the planning, design and implementation of the proposed Columbia Pike Streetcar project.

- AFA members are excited about the addition of the Columbia Pike Streetcar project to the CLRP. This investment in an attractive transit service in a diverse inner beltway community could foster development in accessible and compact places.
- The AFA stressed that the involvement of individuals with disabilities in the next stage of planning and design for the streetcar project will ensure that the system is useable by everyone. This involvement could save significant time and money given that many accessibility issues can be addressed more easily upfront rather than after the project is built. Planners and engineers can design a project to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but without input from persons with disabilities, the project still may not be easily accessible to people with disabilities.

- Meaningful involvement could include WMATA, Arlington County and Fairfax County hosting a focus group with people in wheelchairs and those with visual impairments to discuss the most accessible streetcar vehicle, and the safest way for persons with disabilities to access the streetcar stations.

General Comments on Transportation-Related Concerns

WMATA should provide information to Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess customers about Metro's emergency procedures and what to do in the event of an emergency.

- The AFA applauds WMATA's efforts on emergency planning for the Metrorail system and specifically on training personnel how to handle Metrorail emergencies. The general public should know more about Metro's emergency procedures and what steps to take on all modes in the event of an emergency, including Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess.

- The AFA was pleased to see a number of useful pamphlets on emergency procedures on Metrorail and recommends that Metro distribute the pamphlets more widely and translate more of the material in Spanish and other languages.

- WMATA should publicize the locations of emergency call buttons in all Metrorail cars so people with visual disabilities know where the intercoms are, and be low enough in all rail cars so that people using wheelchairs can reach the button.

WMATA should identify a budget and marketing strategy for improved language access.

- The AFA Committee commends WMATA for adopting a Language Assistance Plan for customers with limited English Proficiency (LEP) and was pleased to see a number of the committee's recommendations in the Plan. However, the AFA is concerned that a specific budget to implement the Plan's recommendations has not been identified.

- The AFA recommends that WMATA develop a specific marketing strategy to advertise and encourage the use of the language services available for LEP customers, including a mechanism to promote the services at Metrorail stations.

MetroAccess and Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents (STAR) should involve customers in planning and monitoring.

- For over five years, AFA members have considered STAR to be a best practice in involving customers in planning and implementation of the STAR program. AFA members have expressed disappointment that Arlington County has dissolved the STAR user group. AFA members feel that input from the Transit Advisory Committee by persons with disabilities is too limited. Instead of having regular focused discussions with knowledgeable customers, county staff is now looking for a much dissipated forum made up primarily of people who do not use STAR. The AFA urges Arlington County to reinstitute a method to involve knowledgeable STAR customers in the early stages of difficult budgetary and management issues.

- The AFA looks forward to the development of a newly constituted WMATA Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee and hopes the user group will be able to communicate directly with the WMATA Board, and be involved in monitoring customer satisfaction through surveys, a mystery rider program, and performance reports.