
**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**

777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002-4226
(202) 962-3200

**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
December 15, 2004**

Members and Alternates Present

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board
Phil Mendelson, D.C. Council
Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Kathy Porter, City of Takoma Park
David Snyder, City of Falls Church
JoAnne Sorenson, VDOT-NOVA
Rick Canizales, Prince William County
Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Kanti Srikanth, VDOT
Michelle Pourciau, DDOT
Patrice Winter, City of Fairfax
Ludwig Gaines, City of Alexandria
Lora Byala, WMATA
Mick Staton, Loudoun County
Ron Spalding, MDOT
Julia Koster, NCPC
Harry Parrish, Virginia Legislature
Karina Ricks, DC Office of Planning
Bruce Reeder, Frederick County
Rick Gordon, Prince George's County
David Moss, Montgomery County DPWT

MWCOG Staff and Others Present

Ron Kirby	COG/DTP
Michael Clifford	COG/DTP
Bob Griffiths	COG/DTP
Nick Ramfos	COG/DTP
Jim Hogan	COG/DTP

Andrew Meese	COG/DTP
Andrew Austin	COG/DTP
John Swanson	COG/DTP
Wendy Klancher	COG/DTP
Debbie Leigh	COG/DTP
Deborah Etheridge	COG/DTP
Daivamani Sivasailam	COG/DTP
Michael Farrell	COG/DTP
William Bacon	COG/DTP
Jill Locantore	COG/DTP
Steven Kania	COG/OPA
Heather Nalbone	COG/OPA
Joan Rohlf	COG/DEP
Alex Verzosa	City of Fairfax
Jim Maslanka	City of Alexandria
Alex Hekimian	M-NCPPC-Montgomery County
Michael Replogle	Environmental Defense
Harry Sanders	Action Committee for Transit
Bob Chase	Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
Betsy Massie	PRTC
Deborah Burns	FTA
Randy Carroll	MDE
Fatimah Hasan	MDOT
Damon Harvey	DDOT
Tom Biesiadny	County of Fairfax
Tom Masog	MNCPPC-Prince George's County
Nicole Lewis	Arlington County
Eric Gilliland	Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Bill Wolfe	Edwards and Kelcey

1. Public Comment

Bob Chase, Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, congratulated the TPB for approving the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan with the Intercounty Connector included. He said the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study is poised to actually consider real transportation solutions. He said the TPB should instruct staff to develop a transportation scenario that would include new performance-based Potomac River bridges, regional bypasses, parkways and bypasses to the east and west, and public transit improvements capable of improving the nation's third-most congested transportation network. Copies of his remarks were submitted for the record.

Chairman Zimmerman asked Mr. Chase about his recent suggestion that the area needs an

"appointed surface transportation authority" with private sector leadership. He asked if Mr. Chase believed that elected leaders at the TPB are inadequate for the task. He read a media report in which Mr. Chase was quoted commenting on the fact that Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Snyder had voted against the Intercounty Connector, which demonstrates that the region needs an appointed authority. Chairman Zimmerman said that most people tend to think that the problems of democracy are best solved by more democracy, but Mr. Chase's view is evidently the other way around.

Mr. Chase said that surface transportation in the region would benefit from having a regional authority more along the lines of the Washington Airports Authority, in which people are appointed and in which there is greater independence to look at the region's issues on a regional basis. He said that would not necessarily eliminate the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) process of the TPB.

Chairman Zimmerman noted that in the case of the Intercounty Connector not only did Mr. Chase's side win, but won overwhelmingly. He said it appeared that Mr. Chase's objection is that winning is not enough; Mr. Chase seemed to believe that members of the body should not be able to dissent.

Mr. Chase said there is nothing wrong with dissent, but he believed that with a more streamlined process it would not have taken 30 years to get to this point.

Chairman Zimmerman said this was an interesting debate and he looked forward to continuing it.

Harry Sanders, Action Committee for Transit, said he wanted to acknowledge some positive work of staff, which may have been partially based on some of his criticisms that a lot of the work on presenting data for the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) is done after the plan is approved and just sits in a report. He said it was positive that for the first time, staff has fed some of that data back into the Solicitation Document, under Item 10. He said this was a good first step, but a lot more could be done in terms of learning more about accessibility to jobs for both auto and transit and for residents on the eastern side of the region, and for low-income and minority communities. He said this could be a useful metric for the Board to think about as it considers projects that have been proposed for inclusion in the CLRP. He said he hoped future analysis from the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study could also inform the CLRP development process.

Michael Replogle, Environmental Defense, said that in the context of the Intercounty Connector analysis, he had raised a number of concerns at past meetings regarding the TPB's traffic modeling, which he said failed to balance the books on the future job and housing growth in the region. He said a recent peer review of the Baltimore region's travel models, which was sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, raised concerns about population and employment forecasting procedures, in particular the fact that there are no employment control totals for the Baltimore-Washington region. He said that the Baltimore peer review panel found that

employment and job projections need to be addressed by both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. planning agencies because the projected labor pool in the combined regions cannot possibly fill the projected number of new jobs. He said a continuing independent oversight of the travel models is needed.

Mr. Spalding said that Norm Marshall, with whom Mr. Replogle had been working, had prepared a critique of the Baltimore region's models. He said that the Baltimore MPO staff has been coordinating with the TPB staff on model questions, including the forecasted population and employment.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the November 17th Meeting

Vice Chairman Mendelson moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gaines and was approved unanimously.

3. Report of the Technical Committee

Referring to the mailout report, Mr. Rybeck highlighted a few points. He said the Technical Committee believes it was positive to include in the Solicitation Document an evaluation of how the last CLRP is performing. Regarding the goal of increasing households and jobs near regional activity centers, he noted that the data indicates that progress has been stagnant. Regarding the State of the Commute Survey, he noted that the majority of commuters in the region still have free parking, which has a major impact on whether commuters will chose to drive alone to work or not.

Mr. Rybeck thanked COG staff and jurisdictional staff for their assistance over the past year.

Chairman Zimmerman said that Mr. Rybeck's last point regarding parking was very important. He recommended the website of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, www.thinkoutsidethecar.org for more information.

Chairman Zimmerman thanked Mr. Rybeck for his leadership on the Technical Committee, including his important contributions to the Steering Committee and to the TPB process in general. He presented a plaque to Mr. Rybeck for recognition of his service as 2004 Technical Committee chairman.

Ms. Pourciau also thanked Mr. Rybeck for his hard work and diligence.

Ms. Hudgins also thanked Mr. Rybeck. She asked if he had information on the cost of free parking compared to the cost of transit subsidies.

Mr. Rybeck said that would depend on the location in the region. He said in parts of downtown monthly parking prices are as much as \$200 per month. He said he understood the maximum tax-exempt transit benefit is right now capped at \$100 per month.

Ms. Hudgins emphasized it was important to keep those kinds of comparisons in mind.

Mr. Kirby thanked Mr. Rybeck for his chairmanship of the Technical Committee.

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Referring to the handout report, Mr. Jaffe said the Citizens Advisory Committee met on December 9. At the meeting, the committee:

- reviewed comments received at its recent outreach meetings on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study;
- discussed information on travel characteristics, as reported in the 2000 Census, for low-income, minority and disabled persons;
- discussed emergency preparedness issues; and
- discussed the committee's end-of-year report and topics to address in the coming months.

Mr. Jaffe said the CAC's 2004 end-of-the-year report was also being handed out.

Chairman Zimmerman noted the suggestion in the end-the-year report that the TPB does not pay enough attention to public comment. He asked if Mr. Chase was among the CAC members who felt that way.

Mr. Jaffe said that comment was the result of a collective discussion.

Chairman Zimmerman said the information about Census data was very interesting.

Mr. Jaffe said among the CAC's comments was an observation that the data are in fact already quite dated.

Chairman Zimmerman said the rapidity with which the Census data are becoming out of date is staggering. He noted the rising prices of real estate.

Chairman Zimmerman said that Mr. Chase had raised an interesting point by suggesting that if the members of CAC were all appointed directly by the TPB they might be more representative and credible. He said this might a suggestion worth considering. He said it was important for there to be a strong linkage between the CAC and the TPB. He said that in the last couple of years particularly the CAC has been able to make some good contributions. He said that is partly the

result of having good chairmen, but also because the CAC leadership has been able to work closely with the TPB.

Chairman Zimmerman thanked Mr. Jaffe for his chairmanship of the CAC. He said that at the beginning of the year, he had to persuade Mr. Jaffe to take the chairmanship. He said he was glad Mr. Jaffe did take on the job because he thought he had made a difference. He said that outside the TPB, Mr. Jaffe has worked hard to improve transportation in the region. He noted in particular Mr. Jaffe's efforts to improve information about the bus system in the region. He presented Mr. Jaffe a plaque in recognition of his chairmanship of the TPB.

Mr. Kirby also thanked Mr. Jaffe for this chairmanship. He said the CAC meetings have featured interesting and productive discussions.

5. Report of the Steering Committee

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Kirby said the Steering Committee met on December 3 and approved one set of amendments to the FY2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He said these amendments included a number of projects in Fairfax and Prince William Counties, Loudoun, Arlington, and the cities of Alexandria, Manassas and Herndon. He said there was also an amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include two planning projects funded by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Referring to the letters packet, Mr. Kirby noted the inclusion of the final letter from the TPB to the National Capital Planning Commission regarding the CSX rail line study. He said the packet also included the final agreement with the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on sharing of planning responsibilities in the area of Stafford County.

Referring to the additional letters packet, Mr. Kirby noted the inclusion of some material at the request of Stewart Schwartz on a recent study on pedestrian safety issues.

Mr. Kirby also said that comments by Mr. Replogle, which were received the previous day, were included in the mailout packet, along with a staff response.

Mr. Kirby said that staff was in agreement with Mr. Spalding regarding the Baltimore peer review. He said that staff intends to closely review the panel's recommendations to see if there are some improvements that can be made in the TPB's modeling. He noted that the issue of employment growth became a very significant discussion point during the action to include the Intercountry Connector in the CLRP. He said his letter explained that the TPB staff models a much larger region than the non-attainment area. He said that although the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is the region's nonattainment area, emissions results are computed for a larger area. He said that the additional jobs that came in as part of the ICC do affect the modeling. There is a net effect of

increased employment in Montgomery and Prince George's County. It does affect the travel forecasts and it does affect emissions.

Ms. Porter said she did not suggest there was something deliberately wrong with the models. But she said she was still concerned that the promoters of building the ICC were talking about a net increase in new jobs, whereas what got modeled was not a net increase in new jobs. She said the limitations in the model had the Board making a decision on the basis of a set of information that was different than what was going out publicly on this issue. She said she suspected this issue would come up again, and she said the Board needs to figure out a better way of dealing with it.

Mr. Kirby said that his memorandum tried to clarify that when asking the question whether there is a net increase in jobs, it is important to also associate that question with a specific area. He said that in the case of the ICC, there is a net increase in jobs in Prince George's County, in Montgomery County and in the nonattainment area. But there is not a net increase in the modeled area. Essentially there was a redistribution from outside the MSA into the MSA. He said that if an area is large enough, a new transportation investment would not be expected to create a net increase; it would be more likely to create a redistribution.

Ms. Porter said she understood the point, but she said the discussion regarding the ICC in the press did not say there would be a net increase in these counties that would come from elsewhere in the region.

Mr. Kirby said he tried in his memorandum to describe clearly what the model is doing.

6. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Zimmerman said he wanted to make a few final comments as chair. He thanked staff for their assistance throughout the year. He also thanked the TPB officers and other members of the Steering Committee. He said the region has had a number of frustrations regarding transportation, but said that some progress has been made. He noted some accomplishments at the TPB over the past year, including the Street Smart campaign, emergency preparedness improvements, Disability Awareness Day and the continuation of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

Chairman Zimmerman said he was most proud of efforts to raise awareness about the region's transportation funding shortfall, which he said was the duty of the TPB even if the board does not directly control funding. He noted the Time to Act study and brochure, which were released in February, and the successful funding of the Metro Matters program in the fall. He said it was also important to look at long-term funding issues and he noted the efforts of the blue ribbon panel that was established to investigate long-term funding solutions for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Chairman Zimmerman said leaders need to face the fact that the region is starved for transportation funding. But, he said, decision makers at the state and federal levels do not appear likely to increase revenues. He said there is little real power here at the TPB to address this problem, but he said TPB members cannot sit on their hands.

Chairman Zimmerman said the TPB needs to get very serious about exploring what can be done within our powers with limited resources. He said the time has come to take a close look at any proposal that has the potential to make even a marginal improvement at low cost. He said the only responsible course of action is to reexamine ideas that may have been rejected or never fully considered, and to look for new ones that may not have been put on the table.

Chairman Zimmerman listed three ideas that he said deserve consideration:

- Implement a 24/7 incident management organization for the region that would allow damaged vehicles to be cleared more quickly, adjust traffic signal timing and provide more timely information to the public.
- Take some seats out of Metrorail cars to provide more capacity. Chairman Zimmerman said that sometimes standing on the train is not as bad as being left standing on the platform.
- Restore HOV capacity to the 14th Street Bridge. Chairman Zimmerman emphasized that HOV facilities on the bridge would permit direct bus service from Virginia into the District of Columbia. He said that twenty years ago with the advent of Metrorail, direct bus service was considered duplicative. But he said that now it is an old idea worth reconsidering.

Chairman Zimmerman challenged regional leaders to add other proposals to this list. He said that instead of finding reasons not to do them, TPB members should find reasons to do them. He said he looks forward to continuing the regional dialogue and working with the TPB. He thanked the Board members for the support they have given him as chair, even when they disagreed with him.

7. Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of TPB Officers for Year 2005

Speaking as the chair of the Nominating Committee, Ms. Porter thanked the other members of the Committee—Ms. Pourciau and Ms. Ticer.

Ms. Porter reported that the Committee had nominated Phil Mendelson for chair, Michael Knapp for first vice chair and Catherine Hudgins for second vice chair. She moved approval of that slate of nominees.

The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

Vice Chairman Mendelson presented a plaque to Chairman Zimmerman in recognition of his outstanding service to the region as Chairman of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board for 2004. He said that Chairman Zimmerman had done a great job.

8. Appointment of the Six Members Designated by the 2004 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the CAC for the Year 2005

Referring to the mailout material, Chairman Zimmerman read the names of the six individuals who had been elected by the 2004 CAC to serve on the 2005 CAC:

- Maryland: Nathaniel Bryant, Stephen Caflisch
- District of Columbia: Harold Foster, Lee Shoenecker
- Virginia: Allen Muchnick, Stewart Schwartz

A motion was made to approve the six designees. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

Ms. Pourciau noted that the CAC in 2004 only included males. She asked that efforts be made to change that dynamic for the coming year.

9. Briefing on the Draft Results of the Eight-Hour Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2004 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and Fiscal Year 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Clifford briefed the Board on issues related to the conformity assessment using the 8-hour standard.

Mr. Clifford said that the Board in November had approved a conformity assessment based on the previous EPA conformity requirements under the one-hour standard. During the year, while the CLRP and TIP were being developed and analyzed using the one-hour standard, EPA issued a final rule on the new 8-hour standard. EPA also designated a different geographic area for the Washington region's non-attainment area for the 8-hour standard.

Mr. Clifford said the new conformity assessment will essentially be a supplemental effort because it is using the exact same data, models and methods as used for the one-hour assessment. He said the primary difference was that year 2010 will be the attainment date for the 8-hour ozone requirement, which means that a 2010 analysis, a year that previously was not analyzed, was added to the assessment.

Mr. Clifford said the region's air quality agencies are expected to develop an 8-hour ozone

attainment plan in approximately two years. Until that time, EPA has indicated that the TPB should use the one-hour mobile emissions budgets that have been in force for the last two years. Those budgets were used in the report that had been distributed. Mr. Clifford said that under those budgets, the forecast emissions were within the budgets, which would provide a basis for a conformity determination.

Mr. Clifford said the draft results had been released for public comment. Action was scheduled for the next meeting.

Ms. Ricks asked if she was correct in understanding that no emissions budget was in place for the forecasted 2010 emissions.

Mr. Clifford said that was correct. There is no context yet in place for the 8-hour requirements.

Mr. Kirby said that forecasts of declining emissions are in place and will not necessarily change. But he said it is not yet clear under the 8-hour standard what the ceilings will be. He said the budget level under the one-hour standard for 2005 was used in this analysis. For 2005, emissions were within the budgets and continue to decline in subsequent years. But he said the specific emissions requirements for the 8-hour standard for 2010 will not be known for some time.

Ms. Koster asked for a clarification of the reason emissions dropped between 1990 and 2005.

Mr. Clifford said there are a variety of cause and effect elements. He said cleaner car standards are a major reason, but also reformulated fuels and inspection maintenance programs.

10. Briefing on the Draft Solicitation Document and Schedule for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2005 Constrained Long Range Plan and the FY2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Kirby briefed the Board on the draft Solicitation Document for projects for next year's update to the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He said that unlike previous versions, the document includes information on the performance of the existing plan. He said the Solicitation Document was scheduled to be released in January.

Mr. Kirby called attention to the schedule for this amendment process. He said submissions would be released to the public on February 10 and reviewed by the TPB on February 16. On March 16, the TPB would be scheduled to approve the project submissions for inclusion in the conformity analysis. In order for those projects to be approved for analysis on March 16 they would have to be sufficiently well specified and they would have to be part of a financial plan that is credible. He said the schedule calls for the CLRP and TIP, along with an associated conformity finding, to be

approved in September.

Vice Chairman Mendelson asked that some changes be made in the document:

- The Solicitation Document should explicitly put a priority on submissions that further the implementation of the regional traffic signal optimization program. Vice Chairman Mendelson noted that the program was a given high priority by the TPB a few years ago when it was approved as a Transportation Emissions Reduction Measure (TERM).
- The Solicitation Document should highlight as a priority that we're encouraging that there be submissions that further the TPB's goals of inter-agency coordination for incident management.
- The Solicitation Document should encourage agencies to show how the project submissions are addressing the TPB's Vision's goals and strategies, such as goal number 2, strategy number 4, which is "Give high priority regional planning and funding for transportation facilities that serve the regional core and regional activity centers, including expanded rail service and transit centers where passengers can switch easily from one transportation mode to another."

Mr. Kirby noted that there is a section on the submission form that calls for a submitting agency to identify a project's contribution to the Vision goals. He said that staff has not previously reviewed all of the projects to see how many of the goals are being addressed and to what extent. He asked if his understanding was correct that Vice Chairman Mendelson was suggesting that this kind of a review be performed after the projects are submitted.

Vice Chairman Mendelson said that was correct.

Speaking as chair of the Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) committee, Mr. Snyder said that Vice Chairman Mendelson's first two points in particular made a lot of sense.

Chairman Zimmerman said there seemed to be general assent on those points.

Mr. Spalding said that this should not be prescriptive because the Vision has many priorities. He commented that he hoped that the Board would not be looking to rate projects or seeking criteria to approve them.

Vice Chairman Mendelson said that regarding the third point, he was concerned with the phrasing in the Solicitation Document. He said he wanted the document to elicit a response that would help him assess how projects relate to particular Vision goals. He said that his first two points would be statements of the high priority that the TPB placed on signal optimization and incident

management.

Mr. Spalding said that highway and transit investments are all priorities.

11. Briefing on the State-of-the-Commute Survey Conducted by the Commuter Connections Program

Referring to the mailout background material and the handout presentation, Mr. Ramfos briefed the Board on the state of the commute survey, which is performed every three years. His presentation included background, highlights and conclusions from the survey. He also provided some transportation demand management benchmarking information from other parts of the country.

Chairman Zimmerman noted that the survey indicated that driving alone increased slightly from 70% in 2001 to 71% in 2004 and carpooling and vanpooling dropped slightly from 7% to 6%. He said that these changes were so slight that they were unlikely to be statistically significant, and in fact, it was possible to draw the conclusion that there was no change. In addition, he said another way of looking at these statistics is to note that 30% of commuters are not driving alone.

Chairman Zimmerman asked if the survey was counting all trips or just vehicular trips

Mr. Ramfos said these are percentages of commuting trips. Respondents were asked what they do each day of the week.

Chairman Zimmerman asked if that included people who walk to work.

Mr. Ramfos said it does.

Chairman Zimmerman said that in many places around the country 30% would be considered very high.

Mr. Ramfos that was probably correct, especially in areas that have a million or more workers.

Chairman Zimmerman asked for clarification regarding the reasons that respondents gave for not using transit, which was on page 12 of the handout presentation. He asked if the percentages provided were based on total respondents or if they were based on the number of people who said they did not use public transit.

Mr. Ramfos said they were percentages of people who said they did not use the mode in question.

Chairman Zimmerman emphasized that the information in the survey is based on what people said

they did, not necessarily what they actually did.

Mr. Ramfos that was correct. The survey information was self-reported.

Chairman Zimmerman thanked Mr. Ramfos and said the results were very interesting. He said he believed the most significant conclusion is that these measures would be more effective if housing and employment could be concentrated on major corridors in activity centers and if there were less free parking.

He said he believed the most disconcerting information was the increase in the average one-way commute distance.

Vice Chairman Mendelson noted that Mr. Ramfos provided comparisons with Atlanta, Houston, Phoenix and San Diego. He asked if there were other cities with similar programs.

Mr. Ramfos said there are other cities with similar programs. He said he had chosen cities for comparison that seemed to have comparable types of infrastructure and programs in place.

Vice Chairman Mendelson said he was curious to know what cities like New York City, Chicago or Cleveland would be experiencing.

Mr. Ramfos said he could provide that information.

Ms. Ricks asked for a report on how TDM in smaller subsections of the region have worked.

Mr. Ramfos said the information could be broken out by jurisdiction.

Ms. Ricks asked if that information could be made available by the next meeting.

Mr. Ramfos said they would attempt to get it by then.

12. Briefing on Travel Characteristics for Minority and Disadvantaged Populations Based on the 2000 Census

Referring to the mailout material, Ms. Klancher provided a quick summary of the material. She emphasized that not only are low-income and minority population groups transit-dependent, they also tend to be bus-dependent, as shown in the 2000 Census data.

Ms. Porter thanked Ms. Klancher for this presentation and for all the work she has done in staffing the Access for All Committee. She encouraged the Board to look more closely at the information that was presented.

Ms. Pourciau said that the information presented to TPB tends to focus on percentages, but she said that percentages can look very flat. She said that it would be useful also to look at real numbers. She also emphasized that more attention needs to be paid toward making transit better and easier, especially for people with limited flexibility in choosing how to travel. She thanked Ms. Klancher for the presentation.

Chairman Zimmerman also thanked Ms. Klancher for providing useful information. He said he planned to review the material more closely

13. Other Business

Vice Chairman Mendelson asked for a report at a future meeting on the Metro funding panel.

14. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.