

2007 END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
Jim Larsen, 2007 Chairman

The TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) takes seriously its mission, as defined in the TPB Participation Plan, to provide the TPB with "region-oriented citizen advice." In recent years, the committee has developed two sets of recommendations regarding 1) information about and analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (*January 2006*) and 2) the future of the TPB's Scenario Study (*February 2007*). These two sets of recommendations are attached to this report on pages 8-21.

Throughout 2007, the CAC focused on reviewing the implementation of the committee's recommendations. We are pleased that some of our suggestions have been put into practice, and in other cases, we are cautiously optimistic about the possibility of implementation. In those cases in which our recommendations have not been implemented, we remain interested in whether and how these ideas might be put into action.

This 2007 year-end report focuses on a number of key issues arising from our past recommendations that continue to interest the committee.

FOLLOWUP ON RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLRP/TIP INFORMATION & ANALYSIS (January 2006)

The CAC's Recommendations on CLRP/TIP Information and Analysis (see Appendix A on pages 8-15), which were presented to the TPB in January 2006, were loaded with detailed suggestions on how the TPB's public information and public comment systems could be improved. We are pleased that many of our ideas have been or are in the process of being implemented.

Not surprisingly, our broader and more ambitious recommendations regarding the overall process for CLRP/TIP development have not been so easy to implement. In April 2007, the CAC passed a resolution calling attention to continuing "CLRP public process and procedural problems, and recommendations." A copy of that resolution is attached to this report on page 23.

The committee continues to believe that our 2006 recommendations are worth considering, and we wish to call attention to some key points:

- *Develop a Regional Priorities Plan that accompanies the CLRP and is derived from the Scenario Study.*

Both our 2006 CLRP/TIP recommendations and our 2007 scenario study recommendations called for the TPB to "develop a list or plan of unfunded priority projects that would provide a 'big picture' context for understanding the Constrained

Long-Range Plan (CLRP). The development of this priorities plan could start with the projects that have been identified for study in the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study."

The CAC continues to believe that the absence of such a regional priorities plan represents a missing link in our regional planning process. We believe that a plan representing the region's transportation and land-use aspirations could facilitate a more coordinated, and ultimately more effective, regional transportation system. We strongly urge the Scenario Study Task Force to move toward the development of such a plan.

- ***Conduct a public forum on project submissions every year at the beginning of the CLRP/TIP cycle.***

The CAC's 2006 CLRP/TIP recommendations called for the TPB to conduct an annual forum at the beginning of the CLRP/TIP cycle in which the DOTs and WMATA would explain which projects they intend to submit that year for inclusion in the CLRP and TIP.

At the *end* of 2007, the CAC did receive presentations from the DOTs that provided some flavor of the kind of input that we believe should be provided at the *beginning* of the CLRP/TIP cycle. In October, the monthly CAC meeting included a Public Forum on the FY 2008-20013 TIP, which was required by SAFETEA-LU. While this TIP forum was informative, and as a first attempt it was a useful experience, CAC members asked an obvious question afterwards: *What is the purpose of having a public forum at the tail-end of the TIP development process?*

CAC members indicated that it would be a more useful public service to ask the DOTs and WMATA at the beginning of the CLRP/TIP cycle to come to a well-publicized forum at which they would be asked to describe a number of key pieces of information that make that year's CLRP and TIP "different" from the previous year:

1. What are the significant projects (i.e., projects that are very expensive, have received significant public attention or are otherwise deemed to be noteworthy on a regional basis) that the implementing agencies will be submitting for the CLRP that year?
2. What is the status of significant projects already included in the CLRP?
3. What is the process through which projects have been identified and prioritized for inclusion in the CLRP?
4. What is the status of significant projects that have not been submitted for inclusion in the CLRP?
5. How is the budgeting process and programming process for the TIP expected to unfold in the coming year?

The CAC believes that the ideal time for this initial forum would be early-to-mid September so that analysis of the current year's CLRP and TIP will be available. This would still, however, allow time for participants to influence the project-submission process for the subsequent CLRP and TIP. In concert with the forum, the CAC supports

outreach to community leaders, i.e. the “informed constituency”, as described in the newly adopted TPB Participation Plan. This could include setting up a structure for public comment in advance of the forum and submittal of questions (in addition to those listed above) to be addressed by the DOT representatives in their presentations. The CAC also indicated that the forum could be more effective in informing the public if the TPB could make relevant materials available in advance of the forum, such as the existing long-range plans of the implementing agencies.

- ***Make public comments more useful to decision-makers.***

In its 2006 CLRP/TIP recommendations, the CAC asked staff to reevaluate the form, content and timing of the document that is distributed to the TPB containing a summary of comments and responses to comments. The CAC wishes to reiterate the recommendation that in summarizing and responding to public comments, staff should, among other things, “...take a broad view instead of a narrow technical view of the TPB’s responsibility in dealing with the CLRP.” The CAC believes the TPB’s concerns should (a) include, but should go beyond, whether submissions technically comply with legal requirements and (b) include an evaluation process of each project submission so as not to eliminate or negate consideration of public input but to incorporate public response as much as it can be permitted.”

FOLLOWUP ON THE CAC’S SCENARIO STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS (February 2007)

The CAC presented ten recommendations on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS) in February 2007 (see Appendix B on pages 16-21). These recommendations emphasize what the CAC believes to be the necessity of regional scenario planning activities to support regional transportation and land-use decision making, and focus on ways in which the usefulness of these activities can be enhanced.

At the request of TPB member Chris Zimmerman, TPB staff presented responses to those recommendations in March. In general, these responses indicated that staff was interested in implementing or considering implementation of all the recommendations, but some issues could be addressed more quickly than others.

Several issues are worth highlighting:

- ***Scenario study task force established.*** Recommendation Number 10 in the CAC Scenario Study Recommendations called for the TPB to establish a task force to guide the future work of the scenario study. In July, the CAC sent a letter to TPB Chairman Hudgins urging the establishment of such a task force (copy of letter attached on pages 24-25).

The committee is pleased that the task force was established in September of 2007 and that provisions have been made for CAC participation on the task force. The CAC is

optimistic that this task force will provide the necessary policy leadership for the scenario study as it enters a new phase. We are also hopeful that the task force will assist the TPB in linking the TPB's scenario planning activities with concrete regional action.

- ***Value Pricing: Develop a scenario that focuses on converting existing lanes.*** Recommendation Number 9 in the Scenario Study Recommendations called for the TPB to develop a scenario that would primarily focus on converting existing lanes to toll lanes instead of building significant new capacity that would be tolled:

“Currently, the extensive toll lane scenario under analysis mainly looks at new roads or widening existing roads. The committee would be interested in a scenario that focuses mainly on converting existing lanes to variably priced lanes to boost their productivity during peak hours and support high efficiency express bus, bus rapid transit, and other transit services. One approach could emphasize enhanced transit utilizing the variably priced lanes. Another could integrate variably priced lanes into an existing scenario that emphasizes transit, including increased rail transit. The scenarios could be refined by including limited additional road capacity increases in the segments of the system where tolls would have to be set very high to keep traffic operating efficiently even with improved transit services.”

The committee is disappointed that all of the value pricing scenarios examined to date would include large networks of newly built tolled capacity, and believes that the study of value-priced lanes scenarios is incomplete without analysis of at least one scenario consisting predominantly of toll lanes converted from existing lanes, along the lines discussed in more detail in Recommendation Number 9. The CAC hopes that the next stage of the Scenario Study will include development and analysis of such a scenario.

- ***TLC: Beef up the program and link it to regional planning.*** The CAC strongly supported the establishment of the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program and supports the expansion of the program. Recommendation Number 5 in the CAC Scenario Study Recommendations urged the TPB to “become a national leader in adopting and generously funding cutting-edge regional transportation planning and capital programs.” Among other things, we believe the program should be used to encourage housing and employment in close proximity to transit.

In the future, the committee hopes the TLC program will be more explicitly linked to the development of the TPB's scenario study and also to the development of a regional priorities plan that would accompany the CLRP and is derived from the Scenario Study (see recommendation for a Regional Priorities Plan above).

- ***Outreach applauded.*** As far back as 2003, the CAC called for the TPB to conduct expanded outreach on the scenario study. At the urging of the CAC, staff developed the presentation “What if the Region Grew Differently?” which in 2006 was enhanced to include an interactive component in which participants were asked to build their own scenarios as a means of spurring meaningful discussion and feedback on the study.

We are very pleased that these outreach forums have been conducted across the region, and more importantly that the feedback from these events, in tandem with our recommendations, was compiled into a comprehensive report presented to the TPB in July 2007 and is forming a basis for consideration in developing the next steps of the scenario study. We hope that feedback from any future Scenario Study outreach will also be conveyed to the TPB in a similar manner.

- ***Make information useful to decision makers.*** Finally, consistent with Recommendation Number 8 in the CAC Scenario Study Recommendations, we believe the TPB should make the Scenario Study as useful as possible by providing detail on which actions could be most effective. Among other things, we believe that whenever possible, the findings from the Scenario Study should be categorized by locality or jurisdiction so that the DOTs, local governments and other implementing agencies will be able to integrate the study's findings into their respective planning and implementing activities.

OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST IN 2007

The CAC monitored a number of other TPB issues and activities in 2007. Two priorities are listed below:

- **TPB Participation Plan**

In 2007, the TPB developed a new Participation Plan, which is designed to meet new federal requirements, and more importantly to articulate a more integrated and strategic approach to the TPB's public involvement activities. TPB staff briefed the CAC on the draft Participation Plan at five meetings throughout the year. We were pleased to have been given the opportunity to provide substantive input from the early stages of the plan's development to its eventual completion, and think it provides a framework for continued improvement of interaction between the TPB and the public.

CAC members made a number of detailed comments on the plan, in addition to some broader points about participation that we believe are worth repeating:

- Public involvement activities need to convey realistic expectations for participation in the regional transportation planning process and also explain the real world limitations of the TPB.
- Participation activities must be balanced between the limited number of people who are very involved and whose information needs are greater with the majority of the region's residents who are not involved and may require basic information about regional planning issues. Achieving this balance will be difficult.
- The CAC would like to be closely involved in the development of the annual TPB Participation Program, which will strategically determine how the needs of these different types of "publics" will be met.

- The most daunting challenge pertaining to TPB public participation remains the question of how public input is processed, acknowledged, and incorporated in the decision-making process. The new Participation Plan recognizes this challenge but we remain concerned about the implementation of an effective “feedback loop” for public input, which is more necessary than ever in informing TPB decisions.

- **Street Smart**

Since its inception, the CAC has monitored and supported the Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign. In April 2007, the committee passed a resolution supporting the expansion of the program from a once-a-year to a twice-a-year media campaign. The CAC is pleased that the region’s jurisdictions have increased their financial contributions to the Street Smart program, and that for the first time it will be conducted in both the spring and fall of 2008. The CAC resolution on Street Smart is attached to this report on page 22.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The CAC understands that regional transportation planning requires a balance between reality and vision. As such, the CAC is interested in the TPB’s reality-based constrained planning, which is a federal mandate, as well as the TPB’s scenario planning activities, which we believe are mandated by an increasingly dark vision of a future colored by growing congestion, regional inequities and global climate change.

We look forward to continuing to work with the TPB on ways to improve the outlook for our vibrant region.

Attachments

- A. CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), *January 2006, pages 8-15.*
- B. CAC Recommendations Regarding the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS), *February 2007, pages 16-21.*
- C. CAC Resolution supporting expansion of the Street Smart Campaign, *April 2007, page 22.*
- D. CAC Resolution on CLRP Public Process and Procedural Problems, and Recommendations, *April 2007, page 23.*
- E. Letter to TPB Chair Cathy Hudgins from CAC Chair Jim Larsen urging the TPB to establish a task force on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study, *June 2007, pages 24-25.*

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS for Improving Information and Analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

January 18, 2006

On January 12, 2006, the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) approved the following recommendations on how to improve information and analysis for the TPB's key planning activities – the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The recommendations were developed in 2005 by a CAC working group chaired by Stephen Caflisch.

The CAC recommendations are summarized on pages 1-2 [pp 8 & 9 of the 2007 CAC End-of-Year Report]. Detailed explanations of the recommendations are provided on the following pages.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve Public Information

Goal: CLRP/TIP information should be accurate, useful and user-friendly. Information on specific projects, as well as data on the overall plan, should be readily available.

Recommendations:

- Continue planned improvements:
 - Improve public comment postings on the web.
 - Develop a web-based CLRP homepage.
 - Implement an online project database.
- Provide better project information, such as concise project cost information.
- Make public comments more useful to decision makers.
- Conduct a survey of newsletter readers.

2. Provide More Analysis, Earlier in the Process

Goal: In order to have meaningful impact, analysis must be made available earlier and must be more user-friendly.

Recommendations:

- Continue planned improvements:
 - Provide more user-friendly analysis like the recent brochure containing analysis of the current CLRP.

- Seek input from the CAC and citizens to determine what types of system performance information would be most useful for public discussion.
- Develop more effective methods for presenting analysis.
- Make specific enhancements/additions to CLRP analysis:
 - Focus analysis on activity centers instead of activity clusters.
 - Consider analyses to supplement or replace the accessibility to jobs analysis.
 - Clearly present information on land use inputs and their interaction with travel demand modeling.

3. Consider Changes in the Planning Process

Goal: In order to optimize the improvements recommended above, and to provide a fuller context in which the public can understand transportation decision making, the TPB should consider fundamental changes in the planning process.

Recommendations:

- The TPB should:
 - Lengthen the CLRP/TIP development cycle *or* identify another way to permit more time to integrate analysis and strategic thinking into the development of the CLRP and the TIP.
 - Ask the implementing agencies to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen—either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional (Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and D.C.) level or by enhancing existing subregional meetings/events.
 - Develop a list or plan of unfunded regional transportation priorities. The development of this plan could start with the projects that have been identified for study in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN DETAIL

1. IMPROVE PUBLIC INFORMATION

The working group believes that CLRP/TIP information should be accurate, useful and user-friendly. Information on specific projects should be readily available, as well as data on the overall plan.

In recent years, staff has made significant improvements in the CLRP documentation and in CLRP information on the website. These enhancements include the brochure and CD that were produced for the 2003 CLRP.

In response to a CAC recommendation in 2004, staff implemented a website-based public comment system that allows citizens to enter their comments directly into the website. These comments are indexed, allowing other people to read the comments and sort them according to name, organization, jurisdiction, and position on key issues (pro/con/other).

Planned improvements:

Partly in response to continued CAC interest, TPB staff is currently planning a number of new, broad improvements in CLRP/TIP information. These changes include:

- ***Transition to a “living” document.*** A new web-based CLRP will become a living document instead of the 3-year snapshot that has characterized plan documentation in the past. This living document will be updated on an ongoing basis as the CLRP is amended and as new analysis becomes available.
- ***Make available an online project database.*** As part of the living CLRP document, staff is developing an online project database that will be available to the public. Users will be able to sort the database according to a number of different categories. Projects will be linked to an interactive map.

CAC recommendations:

- ***Continue information improvements.*** The CAC supports the staff’s efforts at CLRP/TIP information improvement. The committee asks to be provided the opportunity to comment upon new improvements as they become available.
- ***Provide new information.*** The CAC makes the following recommendations for staff to consider in the development of new CLRP/TIP documentation:
 - ***Develop a concise table with major projects.*** The CLRP’s Major Projects List should be transformed into a table that would include (in addition to the

information currently available) information on project costs and county/jurisdiction where projects are located.

- ***Clarify the project descriptions.*** The project descriptions featured as pdfs on the website are confusing. These descriptions should be streamlined and clarified.
- ***Add some useful information*** to the project descriptions:
 - Links to DOT/local websites that contain more extensive project information;
 - Breakdown of cost information by total costs and remaining costs;
 - Indication of whether projects have been previously listed in the TIP, but not funded. Each TIP project entry should include (or be linked to) a permanent history file that lists any funding for this project in prior TIPs.
 - A system for linking and aggregating closely related projects, such as highway capacity projects along Route 1 in Virginia.
 - Both "short" and "long" project descriptions for each project. Often the short project descriptions are too vague to support meaningful analysis.
- ***Make public comments more useful to decision makers.*** The CAC supports the website improvements in 2004 that permit citizens and decision-makers to view public comments on the web, and sort them according to various categories. The CAC would like to see continued efforts to make public comments readily available for decision makers to read and use in their deliberations. We also urge that public comments remain available on the web site after the TPB makes its decision on an issue. Often the same issue will arise later in a somewhat different form (as with decisions to include projects in the CLRP for testing and later when the CLRP is approved), and continuing access to the comments would be valuable.

The CAC asks staff to reevaluate the format, content and timing of the document that is distributed to the TPB which contains a summary of comments and responses to comments. Members of the CAC have expressed concerns about the ways in which some comments have been characterized and addressed in the past. We believe staff should be very careful to characterize comments accurately, give complete information in response, avoid giving selective information that favors the position of the DOTs, and take a broad view instead of a narrow technical view of the TPB's responsibility in dealing with the CLRP. Further, because the summary and responses normally are provided very shortly before the TPB meeting at which action is to be taken, concerned citizens often have no effective recourse if they believe their comments have been mischaracterized or dismissed on narrow technical grounds that presume a very narrow role for the TPB. Earlier distribution could at least provide citizens an opportunity before the TPB meeting to notify an interested TPB member of their concerns.

- ***Conduct a survey on the TPB newsletter.*** The CAC also recommends the TPB staff conduct a survey of readers of the *TPB News* to determine how the newsletter and other TPB publications might be made more useful as vehicles for conveying information about the CLRP/TIP and the TPB process in general.

2. PROVIDE MORE ANALYSIS, EARLIER IN THE PROCESS

The CAC believes that analysis of the CLRP should become more integrated into the transportation decision-making process. However, the group recognizes that if plan analysis is going to have a real impact, it must be made available earlier and must be more user-friendly.

Current process for providing analysis

Typically, the schedule for performing the TPB's air quality conformity analysis has driven the CLRP approval schedule: The CLRP's final approval has usually been timed to coincide with the approval of the air quality conformity determination.

Because air quality conformity is performed under a very tight timeframe and is very staff intensive, most other analysis is typically performed only *after* CLRP amendments or updates are approved. For example, the CLRP Accessibility Analysis, which measures how the plan changes accessibility to jobs, has been performed after the plan is amended or updated – typically every year. Other analysis is performed every three years for inclusion in the comprehensive CLRP update document.

Planned improvements:

Partly in response to CAC concerns, TPB staff is making improvements to provide more extensive, user-friendly analysis earlier in the plan's development process.

These improvements include:

- ***A new brochure containing analysis of the current CLRP.*** This brochure is intended to provide information about the performance of the currently adopted plan as a context for future plan updates. The brochure contains analysis on metropolitan growth, travel growth and congestion, activity cluster analysis, and accessibility to jobs analysis.
- ***A lengthening of the CLRP development schedule by two months*** to permit TPB staff more time to conduct analysis. The 2006 plan will be released one month earlier and will be approved one month later than in recent years.

CAC recommendations:

- ***Continue and expand efforts to highlight more analysis early in the CLRP development process.*** The CAC supports the staff's efforts to make more analysis available earlier. In particular, the CAC notes that some features of the recent CLRP brochure could be developed at an earlier stage in the CLRP development process because they do not need to wait for modeling to be completed. For example, the TPB staff analysis of activity centers/clusters does not require travel demand modeling.

- ***Seek input from the CAC and the public.*** The CAC asks to be provided with the opportunity to comment upon new improvements as they become available. Staff should seek input from citizens and the CAC not necessarily on the technical aspects of the analysis that should be performed, but on the type of system performance indicators will be most useful for public discussion.
- ***Develop more effective methods for presenting analysis.*** In preparing analysis, staff should explore new ways for presenting performance data that will be concise and easy to understand.
- ***Make specific enhancements/additions to CLRP analysis:***
 - ***Focus analyses on activity centers instead of activity clusters.*** Under the guidance established by the TPB Vision, activity centers are intended to be focal points for future job and household growth, and nodes for transportation linkages. The CAC is pleased that TPB staff has recently conducted an analysis to determine how these places will be affected by the CLRP. However, the committee is concerned that this analysis used “activity clusters” instead of “activity centers.” Because the clusters are larger than the centers, the CAC is concerned that the analysis may be overly optimistic. Using the activity centers in the analysis would be more consistent with the TPB Vision and with prior CAC recommendations.
 - ***Consider analyses to supplement or replace the Accessibility to Jobs Analysis.*** The Accessibility to Jobs Analysis can be useful but also can be easily misinterpreted, particularly as it interacts with land use. For example, increasing projected jobs faster than projected households “improves” this measure, since the average household considered in the analysis will be closer to more jobs. But the analysis ignores the increasing percentage of all commuters who would have to commute long distances to fill the jobs. Further, to the extent the Accessibility to Jobs Analysis counts jobs that the model eventually disregards, it is quite misleading, particularly in analyzing land use proposals or projects that involve increasing jobs faster than households.
 - ***Clearly present land use inputs and issues related to their interaction with the travel demand model.*** Inputs to the TPB’s travel forecasting models should be more clearly explained to the public. For example, CAC members have expressed two specific concerns regarding the manner in which the region’s jobs/housing imbalance has been addressed in the model: First, decision-makers and the public should understand that TPB jurisdictions assume greater employment growth than can be supported by planned household growth; the shortfall is made up by commuters from other jurisdictions, often outlying jurisdictions not represented on the TPB. Second, decision-makers and the public should understand that when the jobs assumed in the modeled area exceed the employees available from households in the modeled area plus in-commuters assumed from outside the

For example, the alternate land use approved for analysis of the CLRP with the ICC assumed tens of thousands of new jobs in and near the ICC corridor, no new households, and no reduction in jobs elsewhere. Representative from other jurisdictions were assured the ICC would not take jobs from those jurisdictions, yet to balance workers with jobs, the model assumed jobs in all other modeled areas would be reduced. This was done without reporting or accountability. Note that this comment assumes the basic assumption in the model is correct, namely that changes in the rate of increase in employment (or in imbalances between jobs and households) in the modeled area do not affect the number of commuters from outside the modeled area. More serious issues than disclosure arise if the assumption is incorrect.

3. MAKE CHANGES IN THE PLANNING PROCESS TO PERMIT CONSIDERATION OF MORE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

The CAC is fundamentally interested in a planning process that is open and deliberative. In order to optimize the improvements recommended above, and to provide a fuller context in which the public can understand regional transportation decision making, the CAC believes the TPB should consider whether fundamental changes should be made in the planning process.

CAC recommendations:

- ***The TPB should further lengthen the CLRP/TIP development cycle or identify another way to permit more time to integrate analysis and strategic thinking into the development of the CLRP and the TIP.***

The TPB, de facto, produces a new plan every year. Although the triennial update is more comprehensive because it includes a financial analysis, the CLRP essentially undergoes the same cycle every year: Solicitation Document released at the beginning of the year; project submissions in early spring; air quality conformity analysis in spring/summer; and final approval in the fall. Under this annual cycle, the approval of the new CLRP typically occurs at the end of the year—just one or two months before the next year’s CLRP cycle begins.

In previous years, there has been little time to conduct much analysis of the plan until after the TPB approves it. The tightness of the schedule makes it difficult for decision-makers or the public to learn about the CLRP amendments and to reflect upon the plan’s impacts.

The CAC appreciates that the 2006 CLRP development cycle has already been lengthened by two months. However, the committee believes the TPB should further extend the CLRP/TIP cycle to permit the development of more analysis and the release of more public information.

Alternatively, the committee would ask the TPB to identify another way to permit more time to integrate analysis and strategic thinking into the development of the CLRP and the TIP, including analysis of alternatives and mitigation strategies.

- ***The TPB should ask the implementing agencies to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen—either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional (Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and D.C.) level or by enhancing existing subregional meetings/events.***

The selection of projects for inclusion in the CLRP and TIP is an indication of the regional priorities of the implementing agencies. Currently, the implementing agencies hold public meetings on specific projects as they proceed through planning and development, but they do not publicly explain how their annual project submissions are justified in a regional context. Some public involvement opportunities—such as the “Annual Tour” in Maryland or the annual public hearings on Virginia’s Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program—typically address short-term project selection, not long-term prioritization for the CLRP. When long-range project prioritization does occur at the state or subregional level—such as the development of the TransAction 2030 Plan in Northern Virginia—it is often not clear how those planning efforts are integrated into the project selection process for the CLRP.

The CAC believes the TPB should ask the major implementing agencies—the state DOTs and WMATA—to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen. This public explanation could be accomplished either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional level or by enhancing existing state or subregional meetings/events, such as the Maryland “Annual Tour,” to explicitly include information on how projects have prioritized and selected for inclusion in the CLRP and TIP.

- ***The TPB should develop a list or plan of unfunded regional transportation priorities.***

The TPB has extensively discussed the region’s unfunded needs in aggregate, but there is no regional plan that specifies unfunded priority projects. Therefore, it is difficult to put the constrained plan into context within the region’s broader needs or to know which projects the region believes should be funded if more money would become available.

The CAC recommends the TPB develop a list or plan of unfunded priority projects, which would provide a “big-picture” context for understanding project selection for the CLRP. The development of this plan could start with the projects that have been identified for study in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

Approved by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
By unanimous vote, January 12, 2006

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TPB CAC)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS
Regarding the
Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS)**

**February 21, 2007
Jim Larsen, 2007 CAC Chair
Emmet Tydings, 2006 CAC Chair**

I. OVERVIEW

The Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (TPB CAC) continues its long-standing interest in the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. The CAC was the first in 2000 to call for a regional "what if" scenario study that would discuss and debate different transportation network and land use alternatives. Since the study's inception the committee has been an integral player in moving the analysis forward and ensuring a robust region-wide debate on the challenges and policy options facing local and state government. For example, in 2003 the committee proposed the "Region Undivided" scenario, to consider job and housing growth shifts to the eastern side of the region. In recent years, the committee has sponsored or participated in forums called "What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?" that seek to educate the public on regional challenges as they are identified in this study.

As 2006 ended, the CAC was pleased to note the release of Phase I of the study in November and the establishment of the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program which will promote and support local efforts to implement some of the study's findings.

TPB staff has indicated that Phase II of the study will focus on the following activities:

- More detailed analysis of already developed scenarios ("drilling down").
- Analysis of variably priced lane networks and implementation options.
- Public outreach to inform the future development and utilization of the study.

The CAC is pleased that these activities are continuing to move forward. We hope that the new TPB will continue its keen interest in and commitment to this study. We encourage the TPB to conduct the study's next steps in an organized and purposeful manner.

The scenario study has already made an impact in promoting regional awareness of growth and transportation issues. However we believe the study's greatest potential to influence the regional policy debate still lies ahead. The CAC is offering the following goals and recommendations on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study to help maximize the study's overall usefulness. This document includes recommendations on both the study's short-term implementation and longer-term, next steps for scenario planning activities.

II. GOALS

- **The study should be used as a tool to *influence project selection and local land use decisions.***

The CAC believes the study should become a principal tool in project selection and project implementation and should influence local efforts to better integrate land use and transportation planning. As 2006 CAC Chairman Emmet Tydings has noted, TPB leaders are on record in stating that the RMAS should influence project selection. For example, in the *Region* magazine, former TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson wrote that “With this information [from the scenario study] available, transportation leaders can give high priority to projects that advance the TPB’s goals.” In that same publication, last year’s TPB Chairman Michael Knapp emphasized that “We need to think about how the study can feed back into planning decisions.”

We understand that ours is a complex, multi-jurisdictional region, and, therefore, project selection can be quite nuanced and will inevitably occur at a variety of levels and in a variety of ways. For this reason, among others, the CAC is not seeking or recommending a regionally imposed “one-size-fits-all” approach to project selection or implementation. The committee understands that the responsibility for most project selection will — and should — remain at the jurisdictional level, which is responsible for funding and political accountability. But, as a planning tool, the results of RMAS can influence both bottom-up decision-making at the local or state level and regional top-down policy setting and prioritization.

- **The study should be used to *raise awareness with decision-makers and citizens about regional challenges.***

The CAC believes the region is ripe for an intensified discussion about the challenges of growth and transportation development. The scenario study and the presentation “What if the Washington Region Grew Differently?” provide important tools to bring this discussion into regional focus. The scenario study highlights key regional challenges including the jobs/housing imbalance, the east-west regional divide and the need to use land around transit stations more effectively. These issues have a direct impact on quality-of-life concerns of people across the region. Through past outreach efforts, we know that citizens are tired of congestion, concerned about transportation capacity and worried about affordable housing and access to jobs. The TPB’s scenario study should be used to raise awareness about the connections among these everyday concerns and the challenges of growth.

- **The study should effectively use public outreach to inform future scenario planning activities, including the development of regional priorities and identification of implementation strategies.**

The TPB should use the scenario study not just as a tool to raise awareness, but also as a vehicle to obtain public input. This input should be used to develop refined, new or composite scenarios that identify regional priorities. Public feedback should also help identify steps that TPB member jurisdictions can take to implement some of the strategies and projects identified in the study.

The CAC is encouraged by recent TPB staff outreach efforts that are designed to solicit and document public feedback. This outreach is designed to find out how citizens feel about the big-picture, “macro” aspects of the study’s scenarios, as well as localized “micro” issues suggested by the study, including attitudes about how the scenarios would look and feel in people’s own neighborhoods.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. ***Make available the study findings, including the brochure and “What If” presentation, to elected officials and local planning efforts.***

The CAC believes the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study provides an essential regional tool for local land use and other community planning. Many local planning issues and problems are reflected in the regional challenges that have been examined in the RMAS. In recent months, the study was presented to planners and decision-makers in Bowie and in Montgomery County to provide a regional context for very specific local planning challenges. TPB staff should seek additional ways to make the study available to local land use and transportation project planning efforts.

It is particularly important that the RMAS and its results be fully explained to the wide range of incoming elected officials who will play a major, if not defining, role in local and state transportation project selection, funding and implementation, as well as in local land use planning. Both Mayor Fenty and Governor O’Malley, for example, should be fully briefed on the study and what it can contribute to their administrations’ initial efforts to identify and define transportation and land use planning priorities and policies.

2. ***Support and expand the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program.***

The CAC strongly supports the TPB’s new TLC program and hopes the program will be expanded after its initial pilot phase. As stated in the committee’s resolution to the TPB on October 12, 2006, the CAC “urges the TPB to become a national leader in adopting and generously funding cutting-edge regional transportation planning and capital programs that:

- a. encourage housing and jobs to be located within a pleasant walk or bicycle ride of Metrorail and commuter rail stations and very high frequency service bus stops;
- b. partially reimburse companies that locate in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas and provide transit commute benefits to their employees; and
- c. pay for measures that preserve existing roadway capacity in congested regional travel corridors.”

3. *Expand outreach to educate the public and raise awareness of regional challenges.*

The committee supports efforts to expand outreach related to the scenario study. These expanded outreach efforts should include a greater number of forums and more interactive techniques to help citizens understand regional challenges in an experiential manner.

4. *Establish a process for gathering public input and feeding it back to the TPB for the development of refined, new or composite scenarios.*

The CAC recommends that the TPB and staff establish a process for public outreach efforts that will inform the development of refined, new or composite scenarios. This process should determine the extent of outreach efforts and target a number of outreach forums that will be held around the region. The process also should lay out a method for documenting public input and for using the input in the development of new scenarios.

5. *Provide public-friendly information on the TPB’s variably priced lane scenario as quickly as possible.*

The public has expressed a strong interest in toll lanes during recent presentations around the region. The scenario study’s analysis of variably priced lanes could be an important contribution to the regional discussion on this topic. The “What If” presentation should be enhanced as soon as possible with information on the analysis of the variably priced lane scenario.

6. *Move forward with developing and refining scenarios.*

The CAC supports the development of refined, new or composite scenarios that will identify packages of transportation projects and land use strategies that produce positive, synergistic results. These scenarios should draw upon information developed from existing scenarios and from public feedback. The TPB should work to ensure that the analysis of these scenarios is useful to decision-makers involved in project selection.

7. *Use the RMAS scenarios to develop a plan of regional priorities.*

The CAC believes the scenarios should be used to develop a plan of regional priorities not constrained by available funding. This recommendation is consistent with our recommendations to the TPB in January 2006, which stated that the TPB should “develop a list or plan of unfunded priority projects that would provide a ‘big-picture’ context for understanding project selection for the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). The development of this plan could start with the projects that have been identified for study in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.”

Using the study’s scenarios as a starting point, this plan could be developed as an unconstrained element of a comprehensive regional transportation plan, similar to the plans of other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Further, this regional transportation aspirations plan should take into consideration the different unconstrained plans that have been developed at the sub-regional, local and state levels, such as the TransAction 2030 Plan in Northern Virginia.

8. *Develop useful analysis of existing scenarios (“drill down”) to provide more detail on which actions could be most effective.*

The CAC supports TPB staff plans to “drill down” into the scenarios to more extensively examine effects, such as the impacts of individual transit lines or the impacts on specific localities. The CAC believes that this deeper level of analysis can provide useful information to decision makers and potentially influence project selection. But in order to be effective, this analysis must be accessible. The CAC asks that staff seek to make the results of this “drilling down” as user-friendly as possible to decision-makers, local and state planners, and to the public.

9. *Analyze a scenario or scenarios that assume the conversion of existing general purpose lanes to variably priced lanes.*

Currently, the extensive toll lane scenario under analysis mainly looks at new roads or widening existing roads. The committee would be interested in a scenario that focuses mainly on converting existing lanes to variably priced lanes to boost their productivity during peak hours and support high efficiency express bus, bus rapid transit, and other transit services. One approach could emphasize enhanced transit utilizing the variably priced lanes. Another could integrate variably priced lanes into an existing scenario that emphasizes transit, including increased rail transit. The scenarios could be refined by including limited additional road capacity increases in the segments of the system where tolls would have to be set very high to keep traffic operating efficiently even with improved transit services.

10. The TPB should establish a working group to look at future phases of and steps to implement the study.

Once the next steps in the study are completed, the TPB should evaluate how best to advance the study in the future, consistent with the adopted TPB Vision and other regional transportation, land use and integration goals and objectives. Some possible considerations for this future, on-going working group might be:

- a. How will public input be solicited, compiled and reported to the TPB for use in the development and evaluation of the scenarios?
- b. Have we looked sufficiently at scenarios for all modes, including a fairly modest roads alternative and at non-motorized mobility options, such as bike and pedestrian-oriented solutions?
- c. Should the study at some point look at more dramatic scenarios that are beyond current local and state plans? Have we been creative enough in crafting imaginative scenarios?
- d. At what point is the study considered finished? What products are the final “close-out” results, and how will they be reported back to the states and local jurisdictions? How much urgency is there to bring Phase II of the study to completion? Should the study – or at least the follow-up and assessment phases of it – ever be considered “finished”? If not, does it need a different type of institutional vehicle for planning and updating, such as is currently done with cooperative forecasting, the TIP and the CLRP?
- e. In general, what is the appropriate group to conduct initial analyses of policy options that implement the study’s next or final steps?

Attachment C

**Resolution of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the
Transportation Planning Board:**

**Supporting the *Street Smart Campaign*
To Help Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety**

WHEREAS, the Street Smart Campaign is an educational campaign, directed at motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists, with the goal of reducing pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and deaths; and

WHEREAS, the Citizens Advisory Committee finds that to be effective the Street Smart Campaign requires attaining a certain threshold of region-wide public awareness that is only possible with an adequate commitment of resources by the TPB; and

WHEREAS, the Citizens Advisory Committee finds particularly exemplary the letter from Arlington County offering to double its FY 2008 contribution to the Commuter Connections program on the condition that other TPB jurisdictions meet their suggested FY 2008 contribution share.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Citizens Advisory Committee urges the TPB to adopt the staff proposal for funding of the FY 2008 campaign, to include for the first time two phases, one in Fall 2007 and one in Spring 2008, and urges TPB member jurisdictions to meet or exceed their suggested contributions, thus meeting the challenge issued by Arlington County.

Approved by the CAC by unanimous vote, April 12, 2007

CAC Resolution on CLRP Public Process and Procedural Problems, and Recommendations

The CAC expresses concern that projects continue to be submitted for inclusion in the CLRP without thorough public participation and without thorough analysis of alternatives and the impacts of the project, whether favorable or unfavorable.

Specifically, the CAC:

1. Reiterates its recommendation that the TPB should ask the implementing agencies to clearly explain in public forums how the projects for the CLRP are chosen—either by holding special annual meetings at the subregional (Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and D.C.) level or by enhancing existing subregional meetings/events. [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 8] [page 15 of the 2007 CAC End-of-Year report].
2. Reiterates its recommendation that the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study should inform project selection. [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 9] [page 15 of the 2007 CAC End-of-Year report].
3. Reiterates its recommendation that in summarizing and responding to public comments, staff should, among other things, “...take a broad view instead of a narrow technical view of the TPB’s responsibility in dealing with the CLRP.” [CAC Recommendations for Improving Information and Analysis of the CLRP and TIP, January 2006, page 4] [page 11 of the 2007 CAC End-of-Year report]. The CAC believes the TPB’s concerns should (a) include, but should go beyond, whether submissions technically comply with legal requirements and (b) include an evaluation process of each project submission so as not to eliminate or negate consideration of public input but to incorporate public response as much as it can be permitted.
4. Urges that, absent compelling justifications, projects should not be included in the CLRP before the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study and other analyses of alternatives have been completed.
5. Expresses concern with avoiding environmental and alternatives analysis and meaningful public input by characterizing as spot improvements projects that are fundamentally oriented toward capacity expansion.
6. Expresses concern with any processes, including public/private partnership processes, that do not disclose to the public and public officials all significant information regarding a proposed project.

Examples of projects that inspire these concerns include the proposed “spot improvements” of I-66 and the proposed HOT lanes on I-95/395.

Approved by the CAC by unanimous vote, April 12, 2007

Attachment E

Mr. Jim Larsen
Chairman, Citizens Advisory Committee
of the National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

June 19, 2007

The Honorable Cathy Hudgins
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Hudgins:

I am writing on behalf of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to reaffirm our desire to see the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS) effectively used as a tool to influence decision-making and shape regional policies related to transportation and land use.

In particular, we are interested in ensuring that the TPB gives full consideration to the CAC's recommendations on the future of the RMAS (included in attachment). Emmet Tydings, 2006 CAC chairman, presented these recommendations at the TPB meeting on February 21, where they were well received. Following Mr. Tydings' presentation, Christopher Zimmerman, Arlington County Board Member, asked the TPB staff to develop an action plan responding to the recommendations.

The staff responses to the CAC recommendations, which are also attached to this letter, reflect the fact that many scenario study activities are currently underway, but will be concluding in the fall. These activities include public outreach forums, analysis of a variably priced lanes scenario, more detailed analysis of already developed scenarios ("drilling down"), and initiation of the Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program. Regarding public outreach, we understand that staff is planning to present a status report to the TPB in July on the feedback that has been received at public forums. A comprehensive report on public outreach will be presented in October. We are looking forward to the completion of this work.

Once currently ongoing activities are completed in the fall, the TPB staff has indicated that the TPB will determine its next steps for the scenario study. We believe the next three or four months will be an ideal time to begin the process of synthesizing the various RMAS activities and become prepared to conduct a serious conversation later this year regarding regional scenario analysis and visioning, which we believe should be an essential part of long-range planning in this region.

We wish to note one of our key recommendations (Number 10), which stated that the “TPB should establish a working group to look at future phases of and steps to implement the study.” We encourage the TPB to consider establishing such a group in the near future so that the study’s next steps can be considered in a thoughtful, policy-oriented manner that moves beyond the technical orientation provided by the study’s Joint Technical Working Group.

The CAC will continue to monitor the future stages of the scenario study. We look forward to your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

James Larsen, Chairman
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee