

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

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

February 14, 2013

TO: Transportation Planning Board

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

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the January 23rd TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the January 23rd TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda #5 of the February 20th TPB agenda.

Attachments

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 2013

To: Transportation Planning Board

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

Re: Update on Motor Fuel Tax Rates by State

At the January 23, 2013 TPB meeting, Mr. Zimmerman asked whether the state of Ohio should be included in the list of seven example states that have indexed gas taxes. Upon further review, it appears that while an index calculation was implemented in 1996 in Ohio, recent gas tax increases have required legislative action, with the last increase (to 28 cents per gallon) effective July 1, 2005.

The attached table from the 2011 Highway Statistics published by the Federal Highway Administration provides detailed listings of tax rates on motor fuels by state as of December 31, 2010. Also attached is the TPB Weekly Report of February 5, 2013, which draws together information from the TPB's December 31, 2012 letter to state lawmakers and relevant findings from the study of the public acceptability of congestion pricing reported to the TPB at its January 23, 2013 meeting.

Attachment

TAX RATES ON MOTOR FUEL - 2010¹

TABLE MF-121T
SHEET 1 OF 3

AUGUST 2011

(CENTS PER GALLON)

STATE	GASOLINE		DIESEL		LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS		GASOHOL 2/		
	RATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	RATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	RATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	RATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	EXEMPTION
Alabama *	18	10/01/95	19	06/01/92	-	-	18	10/10/95	-
Alaska *	8	07/01/61	8	07/01/61	-	-	8	07/01/61	-
Arizona *	18	07/01/00	26	07/01/00	-	-	18	07/01/00	-
Arkansas *	21.5	07/01/01	22.5	07/01/01	16.5	04/01/91	21.50	07/01/01	-
California *	18	01/01/94	18	01/01/94	6	01/01/66	35.30	01/01/94	-
Colorado *	22	01/01/91	20.5	01/01/92	20.5	01/01/92	22	01/01/91	-
Connecticut *	25	07/01/04	39.6	07/01/08	-	-	25	01/01/05	-
Delaware	23	01/01/95	22	01/01/95	22	01/01/95	23	01/01/95	-
D.C.	23.5	10/01/09	20	10/01/94	20	10/01/94	20	10/01/94	-
Florida *	16	01/01/10	16	01/01/10	14.5	01/01/05	16	01/01/10	-
Georgia	7.5	07/01/71	7.5	07/01/71	7.5	07/01/71	7.5	07/01/71	-
Hawaii *	17	07/01/07	17	07/01/07	5.2	07/01/04	16	07/01/91	1
Idaho *	25	04/01/96	25	04/01/96	18.1	01/01/96	25	07/01/09	-
Illinois *	19	01/01/90	21.5	01/01/90	19	01/01/90	19	01/01/90	-
Indiana *	18	04/01/03	16	04/01/93	-	-	18	04/01/03	-
Iowa *	21	07/01/08	22.5	01/01/89	20	01/01/89	19	01/01/89	2
Kansas *	24	07/01/03	26	07/01/03	23	07/01/03	24	07/01/03	-
Kentucky *	25.6	10/01/09	22.6	10/01/09	24.2	10/01/09	25.60	10/01/09	-
Louisiana *	20	01/01/90	20	01/01/90	16	07/01/93	20	01/01/90	-
Maine *	29.5	07/01/09	30.7	07/01/09	-	-	23	08/01/99	6.5
Maryland	23.5	05/01/92	24.25	07/01/93	-	-	-	-	-
Massachusetts	21	01/01/91	21	01/01/91	25	10/01/08	21	01/01/91	-
Michigan *	19	08/01/97	15	04/01/03	15	01/01/84	-	-	-
Minnesota *	27.5	07/01/09	27.5	07/01/09	20.625	08/01/09	27.5	07/01/09	-
Mississippi *	18.4	08/01/00	18.4	08/01/00	17	01/31/89	18.4	08/01/00	-
Missouri *	17	04/01/96	17	04/01/96	17	04/01/96	17	04/01/96	-
Montana *	27.75	07/01/94	28.5	07/01/94	-	-	23.75	04/28/05	4
Nebraska *	27.1	01/01/10	27.1	01/01/10	27.1	01/01/10	27.1	01/01/10	-
Nevada	24	10/01/92	27	10/01/92	22	07/01/97	24	10/01/92	-
New Hampshire *	19.6	01/01/00	19.6	01/01/00	-	-	19.63	-	-
New Jersey *	10.5	07/01/88	13.5	07/01/88	5.25	07/01/88	10.5	01/01/92	-
New Mexico *	18.875	07/01/99	22.875	07/01/04	12	01/01/02	18.875	07/01/99	-
New York *	24.35	01/01/09	22.55	01/01/09	8.05	01/01/02	-	-	-
North Carolina *	32.15	01/01/08	32.15	07/01/08	27.1	07/01/05	32.15	01/01/08	-
North Dakota *	23	07/01/05	23	07/01/05	23	07/01/05	23	07/01/05	-
Ohio *	28	07/01/05	28	07/01/05	28	07/01/05	28	07/01/05	-
Oklahoma *	17	05/27/87	14	05/27/87	17	05/27/87	17	05/27/87	-
Oregon *	24	01/01/93	24	01/01/93	18.5	09/09/95	24	01/01/93	-
Pennsylvania *	31.2	01/01/06	38.1	01/01/06	22.8	01/01/06	31.20	01/01/06	-
Rhode Island *	32	07/01/02	32	07/01/02	32	07/01/02	32	07/01/02	-
South Carolina	16	07/01/87	16	07/01/87	16	07/01/87	16	07/01/87	-
South Dakota *	22	04/01/99	22	04/01/99	20	04/01/99	8	07/01/09	-
Tennessee *	20	04/01/89	17	04/01/90	14	04/01/89	20	04/01/89	-
Texas *	20	10/01/91	20	10/01/91	15	09/01/97	20	10/01/91	-
Utah *	24.5	07/01/97	24.5	07/01/97	24.5	07/01/97	24.50	07/01/97	-
Vermont *	20	07/01/99	29	07/01/02	-	-	-	07/01/97	-
Virginia *	17.5	01/01/87	17.5	01/01/87	17.5	07/07/07	17.50	01/01/87	-
Washington *	37.5	07/01/08	37.5	07/01/08	37.5	07/01/08	37.50	07/01/08	-
West Virginia *	32.2	01/01/08	32.2	01/01/08	32.2	01/01/08	32.20	01/01/08	-
Wisconsin *	30.9	04/01/06	30.9	04/01/06	22.6	04/01/06	30.90	04/01/06	-
Wyoming *	14	07/01/98	14	07/01/98	14	07/01/98	14	07/01/98	-
Puerto Rico	16	07/01/75	8	07/01/94	-	-	-	-	-
Mean	21.818		22.364		19.103		21.694		
Weighted Avg.	20.737		21.465		9.854		26.268		
Federal Tax	18.4	10/01/97	24.4	10/01/97	13.6	10/01/97	18.4	01/01/05	

1/ This table shows motor-fuel tax rates in effect as of December 31, and any subsequent changes that have occurred through the date shown in the title. Only taxes that are levied as a dollar amount per volume of motor fuel are included on sheet 1. Taxes that apply to all petroleum products without distinguishing motor fuel are omitted. Local option taxes are included only when they have been adopted uniformly Statewide. For States marked with an asterisk, see the notes on next page:

AUGUST 2011

Alabama	The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include a 2 cents per gallon inspection fee. Alabama-registered LPG vehicles pay an annual fee based on vehicle type in lieu of the volume tax.
Arizona	The fuel tax on diesel remains at 18 cents per gallon for light and exempt vehicles, but is set at 27 cents per gallon if used to propel a truck with more than two axles or with a declared gross weight over 26,000 pounds.
Arkansas	The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 0.4 cents per gallon Environmental Assurance Fee. Applicants for LPG user permits must pay a fee in lieu of the volume tax.
California	LPG users may pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
Colorado	Owners of LPG vehicles registered in the State must pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
Connecticut	The tax is computed at 5% of the gross earnings from the first sale of a petroleum product in the State.
Delaware	The tax rate varies annually based on the average wholesale price of gasoline for the previous year.
Florida	Tax rates are variable, adjusted annually. For gasoline and gasohol, in addition to the rates shown, there is a State-imposed State Comprehensive Enhanced Transportation System (SCETS) tax that varies by the county from 0-5.0 cents per gallon. All counties levy the SCETS tax on gasoline, but a few levy less than the maximum rate. LPG vehicles registered in the State pay an annual fee in lieu of the tax on alternative fuels and the SCETS tax.
Hawaii	Effective 01/01/02, alternative fuels pay an amount proportional to the diesel tax as follows: .29 for ethanol, .5 for bio-diesel, and .33 for LPG. An additional 1 cent is added to these amounts, and then rounded to the nearest 1 cent.
Idaho	LPG users may pay an annual fee based on vehicle weight in lieu of volume tax.
Illinois	Motor carriers pay an additional 6.3 cents per gallon on gasoline, 6.5 cents on diesel, and 5.9 cents on LPG.
Indiana	Motor carriers pay an additional 11 cents per gallon. LPG vehicles pay an annual fee.
Iowa	Effective 07/01/02, motor fuel tax rates will be adjusted annually based on the amounts of ethanol blended gasoline being sold and distributed annually.
Kansas	LPG users may pay an annual fee based on mileage and gross vehicle weight in lieu of the volume tax.
Kentucky	Tax rates are variable, adjusted quarterly. A 2 percent surtax is imposed on gasoline and 4.7 percent on special fuels for any vehicle with 3 or more axles. The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 1.4 cents per gallon Petroleum Environmental Assurance Fee.
Maine	Rates are variable, adjusted every February based on past years Consumer Price Index. Rates are effective on the following July 1.
Michigan	For vehicles defined under the Motor Carrier Fuel Tax Act, diesel fuel is discounted 6 cents per gallon at the pump; and assessed a 12 cents per gallon surcharge on a quarterly return, with a provision for a 6 cent per gallon refund on fuel purchased in Michigan.
Minnesota	There is a credit to the wholesaler of 15 cents per gallon of alcohol used to make gasohol.
Mississippi	The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 0.4 cents per gallon dedicated to the Groundwater Protection Trust Fund.
Missouri	LPG vehicles 18,000 pounds or less gross vehicle weight registered in the State pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
Montana	LPG vehicles registered in the State pay an annual fee based on gross weight in lieu of the volume tax. Out-of-State vehicles purchase trip permits. There is an alcohol distiller credit of 30 cents per gallon of alcohol produced in the State with State agricultural products and used to make gasohol.
Nebraska	Rates are variable, adjusted quarterly. The gasoline and gasohol include 0.6 cents per gallon and diesel rate includes 0.2 cents per gallon Petroleum Release Remedial Action Fee. Effective 01/01/02, new Nebraska ethanol production facilities may receive an ethanol production credit equal to 18 cents per gallon of ethanol used to fuel motor vehicles.
New Hampshire	The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 1.5 cents per gallon Oil Discharge and Disposal Cleanup Fee. Alternative fuel vehicles pay twice the usual registration fee in lieu of the volume tax.
New Jersey	In addition to the rates shown, there is a Petroleum Products Gross Receipts Tax. The tax is computed on a cents-per-gallon basis and is applicable to a wide variety of petroleum products.
New Mexico	The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include the Petroleum Products Loading Fee of \$150 per 8,000 gallons (1.875 cents per gallon). Owners of LPG-powered vehicles up to 54,000 pounds gross vehicle weight may pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
New York	Rates are variable, adjusted annually. Rates include the Petroleum Business Tax of 14.6 cents per gallon. The gasoline rate includes a 0.5 mill (0.05 cents) per gallon Petroleum Testing Fee.
North Carolina	Rates are variable, adjusted semiannually.
North Dakota	A special excise tax of 2% is imposed on all sales of special fuel (diesel or LPG) that are exempted from the volume tax if the fuel is sold for use in the State. There is a producer credit of 40 cents per gallon of agriculturally derived alcohol produced in the State and used to make gasohol.
Ohio	Commercial vehicles formerly subject to the highway use tax pay an additional 3 cents per gallon. Dealers are refunded 10 cents per gallon of each qualified fuel (ethanol or methanol) blended with unleaded gasoline.

Oklahoma	Rates shown include 1 cent per gallon tax dedicated to the Petroleum Underground Tank Release Environmental Cleanup Indemnity Fund. When the Fund reaches specified balance, future tax revenues will be deposited in a highway fund. The gasoline, gasohol, and LPG rates include 0.08 cents for fuel inspection. LPG users may pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
Oregon	The diesel and LPG rates shown are paid by users for vehicles not under the jurisdiction of Public Utility Commissioner. Vehicles under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commissioner and paying motor-carrier fees are exempt from payment of the motor-fuel tax.
Pennsylvania	The rates include the Oil Franchise Tax for Maintenance and Construction, a variable rate tax adjusted annually. LPG rate is based on the gasolie gallon equivalent.
Rhode Island	Rates includes 1 cent per gallon tax for the Underground Storage Tank Financial Responsibility Fund.
South Dakota	There is a producer incentive payment of 20 cents per gallon.
Tennessee	LPG users without permits must pay in advance at the beginning of the fiscal year, others pay quarterly. Fee is based on vehicle weight and fuel efficiency.
Texas	Owners of LPG vehicles registered in the State must pay an annual fee in lieu of the volume tax.
Utah	LPG is tax exempt if user purchases annual exemption certificate.
Vermont	Diesel vehicles 10,000 pounds and over pay 26 cents per gallon. LPG vehicles are subject to a registration fee 1.75 times the usual fee. The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 1 cents per gallon for the Petroleum Cleanup Fund.
Virginia	Vehicles weighing 26,000 pounds or more having 3 or more axles pay an additional 3.5 cents per gallon.
Washington	Owners of LPG vehicles pay an annual fee.
West Virginia	Rates are variable, adjusted annually.
Wisconsin	Rates are variable, adjusted annually.
Wyoming	LPG is subject to sales tax. The gasoline, gasohol, and diesel rates include 1 cent for the Underground Storage Tank Corrective Action Account.

TAX RATES ON MOTOR FUEL - 2010¹

TABLE MF-121T
SHEET 3 OF 3

AUGUST 2011

STATE	SALES TAX	
	PERCENT	REMARKS
Alabama	4.00	Applies to fuel not taxable under volume tax laws.
Arizona	5.00	Applies to fuel not taxed under the motor-fuel or fuel-use taxes. Liquefied petroleum gas sold, used, or stored in State is exempt.
Arkansas	4.50	Special fuel for municipal buses and gasoline are exempt.
California	6.00	Applies to sales price including Federal and State motor-fuel taxes.
Colorado	3.00	Applies to fuel taxable under volume tax laws.
Connecticut	5.00	A Petroleum Products Gross Earnings tax is applied to many petroleum products, in addition to the per gallon taxes shown on Sheet 1.
D.C.	5.80	Applies to fuel not taxable under volume tax laws.
Georgia	4.00	A 3-percent second motor fuel tax and a 1-cent sales tax apply to the sales price including Federal motor-fuel tax.
Hawaii	4.00	Applies to the sales price excluding Federal and State motor fuel taxes. Alcohol fuels are exempt.
Idaho	5.00	Fuels subject to the motor fuel volume tax are exempt.
Indiana	5.00	Applies to the sales price excluding Federal and State motor fuel taxes.
Iowa	5.00	Applies to fuel not taxable under fuel tax laws, including those fuels taxable, then subject to refund.
Kansas	4.90	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Kentucky	6.00	Applies to sales price, exclusive of Federal tax, of fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Maine	6.00	Applies to motor fuel not taxed at the maximum rate for highway use under the volume tax laws.
Maryland	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under motor fuel tax laws, unless exempt from the sales and use tax by statute.
Massachusetts	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Michigan	6.00	Applies to sales price including Federal volume tax, except when used in a passenger vehicle with capacity of 10 or more, for-hire, over regularly scheduled routes in the State.
Minnesota	6.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Nebraska	5.00	Gasoline is exempt. Diesel and alternative fuels subject to the volume tax are exempt.
New Mexico	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws. Ethanol blends deductible under the gasoline tax laws are exempt.
New York	4.00	Applies to sales price including Federal motor-fuel tax.
North Dakota	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Ohio	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Oklahoma	4.50	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Pennsylvania	6.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
South Carolina	5.00	Applies to sales price of aviation gasoline only.
Tennessee	6.00	Gasoline on which the volume tax has been paid and not refunded, and motor fuel subject to the fuel-use tax are exempt. Sales tax rate on aviation is 4.5 percent.
Texas	6.30	Applies to fuels not taxed or exempted under other laws.
Utah	4.90	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Washington	6.50	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws. Certain providers of public transportation of handicapped persons are exempt.
Wisconsin	5.00	Applies to fuels not taxable under the volume tax laws.
Wyoming	4.00	Applies to sales price of LPG. Gasoline and diesel subject to volume tax are exempt.



TPB Weekly Report

An online publication of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

February 5, 2013

TPB Urges State Leaders to Increase Funding for Transportation

In [a December letter to state leaders](#), the Transportation Planning Board urged immediate action to increase funding for transportation in the Washington region, citing recent analysis showing that the transportation improvements currently planned through 2040 -- given existing revenue streams -- won't be enough to keep up with expected population and job growth in coming decades.

The TPB called on state lawmakers, the governors of Maryland and Virginia, and the mayor of the District of Columbia to consider a range of potential revenue-raising measures and provided a comprehensive list of approaches that other states and localities have successfully taken to raise additional money.

At the top of the list was increasing the fees that drivers already pay to use the region's roads, especially gas taxes. Between 2000 and 2010, 22 states and the District of Columbia raised their gas taxes; at least seven have indexed their gas taxes to inflation, meaning that as the cost of building and maintaining roads goes up, so do the fees that drivers pay to use those roads.

The other options highlighted in the letter included increasing sales taxes and dedicating the new revenue to transportation, building new toll roads like the Intercounty Connector in Maryland or the Dulles Greenway in Virginia, and allowing local jurisdictions to raise local taxes to pay for transportation. The letter points out that most recent ballot measures to increase sales taxes to pay for transit have been successful.

A major focus of the letter, however, was on raising user fees that are already in place, including the gas tax. The federal government, all 50 states, and the District of Columbia rely heavily on the gas tax to pay for building new roads and maintaining existing ones, in part because of the administrative ease of collecting the tax and in part because the amount of gas taxes paid are closely related to how much one uses roads.

Locally, the District of Columbia was the latest to raise its gas tax -- to 23.5 cents per gallon in 2009. Maryland last raised its gas tax in 1992, to 23.5 cents per gallon. Virginia's 17.5-cent-per-gallon tax was last raised in 1986. For the driver of a car that averages 20 miles per gallon, that's about a penny per mile, or about \$10 a month for someone who drives the national average of 12,000 miles per year.

In states like Maryland and Virginia that haven't raised gas taxes in 20 years or more, inflation has eroded a third or more of the purchasing power of the dollars raised by the taxes, even as road construction and maintenance costs have gone up and as population and job growth have led to steady increases in demand.

And in the future, the increasing fuel-efficiency of vehicles will also eat away at the value of gas tax revenues as drivers buy less gas to travel the same distance and as those who drive cars powered by alternative fuel sources, which are becoming more popular, buy no gas at all.

But that decline will occur slowly over the next several decades, according to recent forecasts from the U.S. Department of Energy. The TPB reviewed the national outlooks at its January 23 meeting. They show gasoline consumption

Related Links

[Letter to State Leaders and Memo Detailing Fuel Consumption Forecasts \(1/23/13\)](#)



[Study of Public Acceptability of Congestion Pricing: "What Do People Think About Congestion Pricing?"](#)

Recent Weekly Reports

January 29, 2013

["More Travel Options, Greater Accountability Needed Before Public Would Support Congestion Pricing, Area Residents Say"](#)

January 22, 2013

["Proximity Matters Most in Choosing Which Airport to Use, Local Air Travelers Say"](#)

January 15, 2013

["Solo Driving to Account for Smaller Share of Commute Trips in 2040"](#)

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declining through 2040, but still amounting to 78% of the 2012 total. Diesel consumption, mainly by heavy-duty freight trucks, is forecast to increase by 37%. Together, that amounts to a 7% overall decline in motor fuel consumption over the next three decades.

The TPB also reviewed the findings of [a recent study of the public acceptability of congestion pricing](#), another revenue-raising strategy identified in the TPB's December letter to state lawmakers.

Congestion pricing is an approach to raising revenue and managing congestion under which drivers pay fees to use roads, and higher fees on the roads and at the times that are in higher demand, like airline and utility customers do. The study engaged more than 300 residents from around the Washington region in extended conversations about the region's transportation problems and the possibility of using various congestion pricing schemes to address those problems.

The study found cautious receptivity, especially to a hypothetical scenario in which all major highways in the region have at least one tolled lane in either direction, like the new 495 Express Lanes on the Capital Beltway in Virginia. Sixty percent of participants said they would "support" or "strongly support" such a system that provides a congestion-free travel option for drivers and the potential for high-quality bus rapid transit service.

Another scenario that study participants considered would charge drivers a per-mile fee for using any road or street in the region instead of paying gas taxes. Drivers would pay higher fees on more heavily traveled routes, and GPS units in vehicles would tally the number of miles driven and the total fee drivers owed.

Only 10% of participants said they would support such a system, citing major concerns about privacy and government overreach, skepticism that gas prices would actually go down when gas taxes were eliminated, and a level of complication that would add new burdens to people's daily lives and make such a system difficult to implement and enforce. Many people wondered why any new fees couldn't just be based on mileage driven, measured by a car's odometer and reported during the periodic vehicle inspections that many states already require.

Another interesting finding of the study was a significant increase in people's support for raising gas taxes after learning more about their current levels and that they haven't kept up with inflation, and after considering more complicated solutions like congestion pricing. Prior to learning about gas taxes and considering alternatives, 21% of people supported raising gas taxes; afterward that number had increased to 57%.

Lawmakers and leaders of both parties agree about the urgent need for more funding for transportation. The Transportation Planning Board has identified a variety of measures that other states and localities have successfully employed and provided information to suggest that gas taxes will continue to be a viable source of revenue for the immediate future; that the public may be open to increasing gas taxes after learning more about past and current levels of the taxes; that other use-based options like vehicle-registration fees and odometer-based VMT fees are also viable near-term sources of revenue; and that local option taxes such as sales taxes dedicated to transit could be a valuable supplement to statewide revenue sources.

"TPB Weekly Report" is an online publication designed to provide brief, timely summaries of recent TPB research, analysis, outreach, and planning in the metropolitan Washington region.

Questions and comments about "TPB Weekly Report" should be directed to [Ben Hampton](#).

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region. The TPB is responsible for directing the continuing transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the states and the local communities in the region. The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby
Director
Department of Transportation Planning

DATE: February 14, 2012

SUBJECT: Update on Topics Raised at the January 23, 2013 TPB Meeting

Introduction

Under the "Other Business" agenda item at the January 23, 2013 TPB meeting, Councilmember Phil Mendelson asked that the TPB receive status reports on three topic areas:

- Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program activities
- Traffic signal timing/optimization in the region
- NextBus information provided for WMATA services.

This memorandum provides a brief update on these three areas.

MATOC

MATOC is a joint program between DDOT, MDOT/SHA, VDOT, and WMATA to promote real-time interagency information sharing and coordination. For brevity's sake, this memorandum will not review in detail the background on MATOC and its associated "data fusion engine", the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS), but this background can be reviewed on MATOC's website at www.matoc.org.

MATOC has an annual budget target of \$1.2 million funded by DDOT, MDOT/SHA, and VDOT. This level of funding has been received from these agencies for both FY2012 and FY2013. The funding supports MATOC staff operations and notification activities based at MATOC's offices in Greenbelt; RITIS operations, maintenance, and enhancements; and special studies. The program is overseen by the MATOC Steering Committee comprising senior transportation operations officials from DDOT, MDOT/SHA, VDOT, WMATA, as well as (ex-officio) the TPB transportation director. The Steering Committee is advised by subcommittees/task forces focusing on operations, transit, severe weather, and information systems.

MATOC continues to be an active program that plays a key role in the region's transportation operations. MATOC was integral in the activities of COG's recent Incident Management and Response (IMR) Steering Committee (formed in response to the regionally disruptive January 26, 2011 snow and ice storm). MATOC has strengthened its working relationships with a variety of agencies critical to regional transportation coordination, including emergency management agencies, local roadway and transit agencies, and the National Park Service/U.S. Park Police. MATOC has also enhanced its use of technologies, both in its notifications to member agencies, and well as through automated information sharing in the RITIS system.

MATOC also has had active and successful roles for recent events with regional transportation impacts, including ramping up to 24/7 operations during both Super Storm Sandy and the Presidential Inauguration period.

Further briefings to the TPB can be scheduled as requested.

Traffic Signal Timing

Staff has contacted traffic signals operations representatives of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highway Administration, and the Virginia Department of Transportation regarding programs in place to optimize traffic signals under their control to reduce stopped delay. These three agencies control and maintain a majority of the signals in the region.

All three agencies have programs in place to study signals and optimize them on an ongoing basis. Staff will continue to work with these three agencies and provide additional details on the current signal optimization programs in the coming months. Staff will also contact other county and city agencies in charge of smaller systems and work with the Traffic Signals Subcommittee of MOITS to collect additional details on signal optimization throughout the region, and will report to the TPB when this information has been compiled and reviewed.

NextBus

TPB staff requested response comment from WMATA on the question of NextBus information, and the following was provided by their media relations office:

Recent media reports created confusion among some customers regarding a third-party smartphone application ("app") that some customers used regularly to view NextBus prediction data. Some coverage may have led readers to assume that all NextBus information had become unavailable. In fact, the "NextBus DC" app mentioned in media reports is only one of many of third-party providers of real-time WMATA bus information. As WMATA noted in their public response, the NextBus DC app was not

officially supported by WMATA, and WMATA was not a party to the private arrangement between the developer and NextBus Inc. (The "NextBus DC" app is not affiliated with NextBus, Inc., which provides WMATA's real-time prediction services. Rather, "NextBus DC" is a third-party developer who had a special arrangement, directly with NextBus Inc., to use a non-standard method of obtaining bus predictions.)

WMATA encourages customers to use other sources for NextBus data--either those provided by third parties as well as by WMATA--all of which remained operational and available to the public via smartphone apps or the web. From a computer, users can visit www.wmata.com and click on "Real Time Arrivals" on the homepage. Similarly, from a smartphone, users can visit WMATA's website oriented for mobile devices, www.wmata.com/mobile, and select the "Next Bus" option.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Eric Randall
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Update on the TPB Bus On Shoulder (BOS) Task Force

DATE: February 13, 2013

At the July 18, 2012 meeting of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), it was requested that a task force be established to identify promising locations in the region to operate buses on the shoulders of highways. The proposed membership, work plan, and schedule were approved at the September 19 TPB meeting.

Work Plan

The approved work plan for the task force has three tasks, with the results of each to be summarized in a technical memorandum.

Task 1 – Summary of Local and National Experience with Bus On Shoulders

Evaluate and summarize BOS experience in the region and elsewhere, including safety, roadway engineering, and bus service operations aspects as well as federal regulations and state legislation.

Task 2 – Assessment of the Feasibility of BOS at Specific Locations

Stakeholder agencies will identify potential corridors for BOS operation on the region's highway network, based on 1) existing highway congestion locations, 2) current bus service, and 3) highway shoulder conditions. Preliminary data will be collected to validate the location selection.

Task 3 – Analysis of Selected Locations in the Region

This task will summarize identified issues and challenges with safe implementation for the region. In addition, a benefit-cost analysis will be conducted to assess the potential for implementation of BOS service on selected corridors/routes.

Task Force Progress

The first meeting of the BOS Task Force was held on October 17, 2012. The meeting included presentations from VDOT, SHA, and TPB staff, followed by a roundtable discussion of local experience and common issues in implementing BOS operations. Highlights of the meeting were drafted and published.

A draft Technical Memo #1 summarizing highlights of local and national experience with BOS was published November 26. Information from implementing agency guidebooks and presentations, and results from Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) reports, was summarized, as well as local experience with BOS operations on VA-267 and US-29 (MD).

Following the first meeting, stakeholder agencies were asked to identify potential corridors for BOS operation on the region’s highway network, based on current and potential bus service, existing traffic conditions, and existing shoulders that could potentially be used for bus operations. The selected corridors for preliminary analysis included the MD 5/US 301 corridor in Prince George's and Charles Counties and the I-270 corridor from City of Frederick to the Capital Beltway, both in Maryland; and the I-66 Inside the Beltway Pilot Project taking place in Virginia. Other corridors were suggested, but are not being studied, including: DC-295, the US-29 corridor (Maryland) from Burtonsville (existing BOS) to I-70; and the US-50 corridor (Virginia). TPB staff held several rounds of discussions with state highway staff, and the progress of the task force was also discussed at the January 2013 TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee, to collect input from regional bus operators.

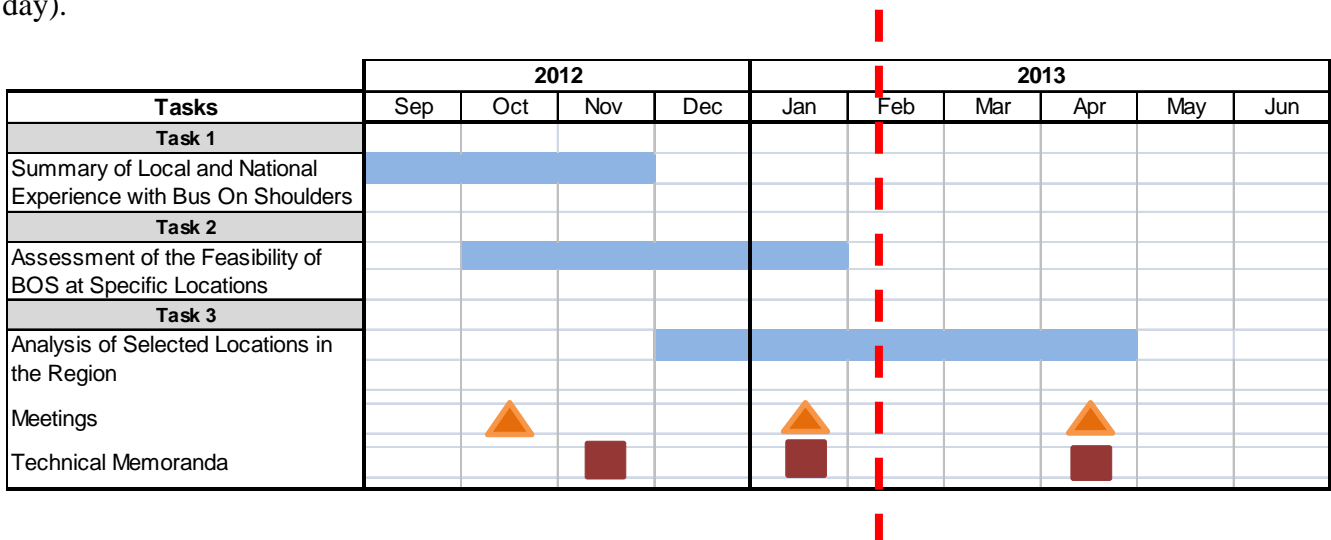
Task Force Meeting #2

The second meeting of the task force was held on January 23, 2013, prior to that day’s TPB meeting. The meeting included presentations from VDOT, SHA, and TPB staff, which provided an overview of the types of data available for analyzing the feasibility of three selected corridors and the issues and challenges associated with further in-depth analysis. Next steps in the analysis and in support of tasks two and three of the work plan were discussed.

All published materials of the BOS Task Force are available online at:
<http://www.mwcog.org/bostf>

Schedule of Work

In February, highlights from the second task force meeting and a draft of the Technical Memo #2 will be published. The final meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for April 17, 2013 (prior to TPB that day).



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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 2013

To: National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

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

Re: TPB Staff Comments on 2012 End-of-Year Report by the
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on
The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

At the January 23, 2013 TPB meeting, Ms. Tina Slater, the 2012 Chair of the CAC, presented a 2012 End-of-Year Report. The first section of this report, “Continued Interest in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan”, is provided in italics below, along with TPB staff comments on key points raised by the CAC throughout the report.

Continued Interest in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

As a committee with a mission to promote public involvement, the CAC has been working for more than two decades to promote a regional discussion of transportation priorities. The committee long ago realized that the TPB’s current planning process provides very limited opportunities for public involvement because most of the decisions reflected in the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) are made at the state and local levels, not the regional level. In order to provide an enhanced forum for meaningful regional planning and public involvement, the CAC since 2006 has sought the development of a regional priorities plan by the TPB.

The committee was pleased that the TPB finally initiated the development of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) in 2011. We are pleased that progress appears to have been made on the RTPP in 2012 and we were impressed with information we received about the focus group that was conducted on June 2.

However, the committee has also has some serious concerns regarding the RTPP. In recent months, we have not received much information about the plan and many members are confused about the direction it has taken.

Staff comment: The CAC received staff briefings on the status of the RTPP and responses to questions raised by CAC members at its meetings on January 17, 2013, November 15, 2012 and July 12, 2012.

To begin, we are concerned about the inclusiveness of the planning process. We had hoped the RTPP development would engage TPB stakeholders and leaders in a constructive and creative dialogue about our region's future. To date, few opportunities for such exchange have occurred. In April, the CAC passed a resolution (included as Attachment A) calling upon the TPB to either reestablish the priorities plan scoping task force or establish a new group to provide regular, substantive input into the development of the RTPP. In responding to our request, Ron Kirby, MWCOG Director of Transportation Planning, said that work sessions on the RTPP would be held prior to TPB meetings and the CAC members would be welcome to attend. We look forward to attending such meetings.

Staff comment:

- As noted in the report to the TPB under Item 14 of the July 18, 2012 TPB agenda, TPB staff conducted five regional stakeholder and listening sessions between January and February 2012, including one session on January 12 with the CAC. Based on the results of those five listening sessions, TPB staff enlisted the assistance of America Speaks in conducting a Citizens Forum on June 2, 2012 to test a revised, less technical approach to communicating the RTPP process. At the conclusion of this forum, 92 percent of the participants stated that we were “on the right track” or “almost right, but needs a little tweaking” in communicating regional transportation goals and challenges to the general public.
 - A work session on the development of the RTPP was held from 10:30 am to 11:45 am in the COG Board room in advance of the June 20, 2012 TPB meeting. Some members of the CAC attended and participated in that work session.
 - An interim report and PowerPoint overview on the RTPP process were presented to the TPB at its July 28, 2012 meeting. Section E of that report sought comments from the CAC, the Access for All Committee, interested stakeholder groups, and members of the general public on “the refined RTPP materials and proposed public outreach strategies.” A web-based comment page provided opportunities for comment during a 4-week period ending on August 15, 2012.

We are also concerned about the role of public involvement. Instead of the “top-down” approach that the plan seems to be taking, we had hoped for more collaborative involvement from a variety of different constituencies throughout the region. Instead, it seems that the RTPP is almost solely focusing on public opinion research through focus groups and surveys using

paid participants. While we appreciate the value of controlled opinion research, we believe that public outreach for the RTPP should be much broader.

Staff comment: As noted in the July 18, 2012 interim report, the current phase of the RTPP process is focused on communicating with and receiving feedback from “a sample of 600 individuals who represent the region, in addition to regional stakeholders and the TPB’s citizen committees.” A web-based tool using MetroQuest software is being prepared to conduct this public outreach.

According to the Draft Interim Report for the RTPP, issued in July of 2012, the TPB staff had planned to conduct a web-based survey of 600 paid participants this past fall. The committee understands that this survey has been delayed. We further understand that in the spring of 2013, the RTPP process was scheduled to conduct additional outreach “during which a number of public outreach tools will be utilized, possibly including a combination of web-based polling, additional deliberative forums, and mobile kiosks throughout the region. The purpose of these efforts would be to inform the selection of priority strategies from a longer list of strategies under discussion.” We hope that all these outreach efforts will still occur, even if delayed.

Staff comment: As reported by staff to the CAC at its January 17 meeting, the web-based survey has been delayed from the fall of 2012 to the spring of 2013 for two major reasons:

- We did not want to be competing for public attention with the media barrage associated with the national elections; and
- We wanted to take the time to take full advantage of the capabilities of the MetroQuest software (the key features of which can be viewed on the MetroQuest web-site)

Once this web-based survey has been completed, an additional work session will be scheduled before a TPB meeting to discuss the results and additional outreach activities.

Finally we are concerned about the final product and the methodology for the plan. Many CAC members had originally hoped the plan would identify priority projects. However, we understand now that the plan will instead identify general strategies. We are concerned that many TPB members and other stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of how the final product focused on strategies will look and how it will be useful. Furthermore, the initial “longer list of strategies under discussion” has never first been adequately vetted by either TPB stakeholders or the general public.

Staff comment: The relationship between strategies, programs, and projects was discussed in detail in the “scope and process” for the RTPP, which was endorsed unanimously by the CAC at its June 9, 2011 meeting, and approved by the TPB at its July 20, 2011 meeting. The strategies to be included in the web-based outreach activity currently underway will be based on the lists of near-term, ongoing, and long-term strategies presented in the July 18, 2012 report to the TPB, and the comments received during the 4-week public comment period conducted through August 15, 2012.

Last year we understood that the plan would be grounded in performance analysis and cost/benefit analysis – and while we expressed some concerns about that approach, we were interested to see its application. But more recently it seems that the emphasis on quantitative analysis has been reduced or even eliminated. It is not clear to us why that original proposed approach was altered.

Staff comment: As reported in the July 28, 2012 report to the TPB, the TPB staff learned from the five regional stakeholder and listening sessions held in January and February of 2012 that “greater emphasis should be placed on the use of narrative, simple charts, and pictures to describe challenges and potential strategies to address them. In general, listening session participants found the performance measures too technical and did not understand their significance for identifying regional challenges.” The materials for the June 2, 2012 citizen forum were designed with this lesson in mind. The web-based outreach currently under development will attempt to strike the right balance between qualitative and quantitative materials. The MetroQuest software has some excellent capabilities for helping us strike that balance.

The CAC represents a group with considerable transportation knowledge. We believe we can contribute to steering the RTPP going forward, and ask the TPB for special consideration to solicit our involvement. We look forward to closer involvement in the RTPP planning process in 2013.