ITEM 9 - Information
May 20, 2009

Briefing on 2008 Peak Period Freeway Congestion in the Washington Region and Changes Through Time

Staff Recommendation: Receive briefing on the recurring congestion observed in the latest survey of Spring 2008, and on changes in congestion locations and durations in comparison to earlier surveys.

Issues: None

Background: Since the early 1990s, the TPB has commissioned aerial surveys every three years to monitor the performance of the regional freeway system during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

May 13, 2009

To: Transportation Planning Board

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

Subject: 2008 Peak Period Freeway Congestion based on Aerial Survey Data

Introduction

Since 1993 the TPB has commissioned aerial surveys to monitor the performance of the regional freeway system during morning and afternoon peak periods. Data are collected through aircraft overflights in which photographic coverage is prepared for the region's entire freeway system (approximately 300 miles). Through use of vehicle density (vehicles per lane per mile) and speed relationships, levels of service (degree of congestion) are ascribed to each freeway segment.

Data Summaries

Such data from 2008 have now been compiled and analyzed. Staff presented summary results at the most recent meetings of the TPB Technical Committee and its Travel Forecasting Subcommittee. These latest data indicate levels of service experienced on each freeway segment; summaries include levels of service regionwide and by location, with the top 10 congested locations and longest delay corridors in the region identified. Also, changes through time are presented, indicating where traffic conditions improved or degraded.

Next Steps

At the May 20th TPB meeting staff will present slides highlighting this work. The full technical report will be posted on the COG website and copies will be available at the meeting.