

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Notes

FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: October 16, 2008

TIME: 9:00 AM to 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Part 1 at COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 2
Part 2 CSX Rail Tour

CHAIRS: TBD

ATTENDANCE:

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Laura Feast, Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC)
Stephen Flippin, CSX
Nicole Katsikides, Maryland Department of Transportation
Valerie Pardo, Virginia Department of Transportation
Rick Rybeck, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Michael Weil, National Capital Planning Commission
David Zaidain, National Capital Planning Commission

COG/TPB STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Tim Canan
Karin Foster
Ron Kirby
Andrew Meese

Part 1.

Welcome, Introductions— Karin Foster welcomed attendees to the third Freight Subcommittee meeting of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments/Transportation Planning Board (COG/TPB). Following introductions, Ms. Foster mentioned that the Freight Subcommittee was fortunate to have a new Chairman, Mr. Victor Weissberg from Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation. Mr. Weissberg was unable to attend but we will see him at future meetings.

Integrating Freight into the 2010 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)— Karin Foster presented on the Draft “*Integrating Freight into the 2010 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan*” report. The hope is to engage the freight stakeholder community with this report and to take it to the TPB in spring for

consideration. The Freight Subcommittee attendees and freight stakeholder community are welcome to provide input and comment to this working document.

The presentation began with Mr. Foster's description of where the Freight Subcommittee sits in the organizational structure at Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) and the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The TPB is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning at MWCOCG. As a body, the TPB is independent from the board of MWCOCG. TPB members include representatives of local governments, state transportation agencies, state and District of Columbia legislature, and WMATA. The TPB is responsible, under federal mandate, for coordinating planning and funding for the region's transportation system. An organizational chart showed this structure. Ms. Foster then noted the draft Freight Subcommittee goals: (1) Be a structured voice for freight concerns in the region; (2) Bring freight issues and information to the TPB; (3) Provide a forum for exchange among freight stakeholders; and to (4) Integrate freight in the CLRP.

Next Ms. Foster presented a timeline for the 2010 CLRP. The final CLRP is expected to be up for approval by the TPB in July 2010. This time period provides the Freight Subcommittee an opportunity to identify projects that could ultimately end up in the 2010 CLRP. Additionally, the Federal Transportation Authorization is up for discussion and now being debated in Congress. A new bill is expected in September 2009. Congress has given increased attention to freight-related projects and there may be increased funding for metropolitan regions in the next bill.

Ms. Foster provided a brief description of each chapter, with an emphasis on Chapters IV and V. The chapters are:

Chapter I. Introduction

Chapter II. Freight Movement in the Metropolitan Washington Region: Data and Forecasts

Chapter III. National Studies and Forecasts

Chapter IV. Stakeholder Perspectives

Chapter V. Issue and Priorities

The Chapter IV on Stakeholder Perspectives theme is to expand the Freight Subcommittee. With less Freight Subcommittee members and diversity, it is more difficult to make a freight policy or project case to the TPB. The chapter includes a list of stakeholders to reach out to (e.g. distribution centers, warehouses, trucking and rail community, associations, MPOs, etc.). The chapter also notes outreach methods such as conducting a survey, our monthly e-newsletter, maintaining the TPB Freight Web Site, and connecting with the freight community through external meetings (e.g. Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals). Chapter V on Issues and Priorities is about project identification. The Freight Subcommittee needs to identify issues of interest to focus on at meetings and target potential projects that could be put in the 2010 CLRP.

The presentation wrapped up with a few next steps. In the next couple months TPB staff will draft and distribute the survey for feedback on freight community interest areas and

potential project ideas. And TPB staff will maintain ongoing Freight Subcommittee meetings and responsibilities.

Questions and Comments: Following Ms. Foster's presentation, attendees had a roundtable discussion on the Draft *Integrating Freight into the 2010 Long Range Plan* report. David Zaidain of the National Capital Planning Commission asked for clarification on the CLRP timeline. Ms. Foster referred Mr. Zaidain to the CLRP timeline slide in the presentation and Ron Kirby, MWCOG Department of Transportation Director, gave several additional reasons why now is a good time to identify potential freight projects. For example, the Transportation Authorization Bill is coming up. He added that there may be an opportunity for national discretionary funding and there's talk of a Nation Investment Program or Infrastructure Program. There is also opportunity when looking at trucks proportion to air pollution, and opportunities for looking at truck movement from a greening perspective.

Laura Feast of SAIC Inc. commented that she is Project Manager at SAIC Inc. for a project to put together a MPO and State template for Freight Plans. Andrew Meese, MWCOG/TPB staff commented that the National Capital Region is an MPO-Region with a service and government-oriented economy, not one centered on one major port or industry; many previous federal examples studied only freight or port oriented cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles/Long Beach. During the 2007 study, Mr. Meese had asked the contractor to identify metro areas that were similar to Washington in this regard and Charlotte, Orlando, and Pheonix were mentioned as similar regions.

Stephen Flippin made some comments about increased freight and passenger growth rates predicted by CSX. He also noted the upcoming expansion of the Panama Canal and the effects it will have on East Coast ports.

Part 2.

CSX Benning Yard and Virginia Avenue Tunnel Security Tour —Stephen Flippin of CSX spoke about the Virginia Avenue Tunnel that attendees were going to see on the tour. The Virginia Avenue Tunnel is a project that is also included in the CSX National Gateway bundle of projects. The tunnel is only single-tracked and does not have double-stack clearance, causing a bottleneck for CSX east coast operations. The goal with these projects is to link the three Mid-Atlantic Ports. CSX seeks to finance this project thru CSX, State of Virginia, and Federal Funding. The Virginia Avenue Tunnel portion of the tour focused on the security technology that is applied to the tunnel. Before heading on our tour, attendees watched a nine-minute video about the security technology.

CSX stated safety precautions and provided hard hat and safety glasses equipment.

The first stop on the tour was Benning Yard. The two main tracks running through Benning Yard represent the freight rail I-95 corridor. The narrow yard has a north and south track, and several other tracks used to stage and sort long trains. These trains can be as long as 100 cars.

At our next stop we viewed the Virginia Avenue Tunnel from the south end. The National Gateway project for this tunnel is to take it from a single track tunnel to a double-track double-stack tunnel. This would allow double stacked trains to move in both directions, making movements much more efficient. The tour focused on the security improvements at Virginia Avenue Tunnel. For example, there is numerous super technology video cameras mounted on telephone-like poles. Each camera has pan-tilt-zoom technology and can detect any movement on the rail track and tunnel entrance. Each camera's view horizons overlaps so as not to miss any detected movements. These cameras can also zoom in to read a badge or identify clothing. These cameras create a virtual wall around the track and tunnel entrance. All movements are monitored and if any movement is made within approximately 50 feet of the tunnel a siren goes off. Additional, an automated voice on loudspeaker warns of unauthorized activity and that security has been called. This security alert is sent to CSX and the U.S. Police. At the tunnel, CSX staff demonstrated the security alert equipment.

Tour fun fact: UPS is CSX's largest customer in value!

CSX returned attendees to MWCOG at 1:30 PM.

Meeting Adjourned