Comments Received on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) August 2013

Comment on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

Submitted by: A Business

Anderson, Mahlon *Washington, DC 20005* *8/23/2013 3:40:42 PM*

AAA Mid-Atlantic

Subject: Regional Transportation Priorities Plan Comments

On behalf of the motoring public, AAA Mid-Atlantic is pleased to present its comments and recommendations on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP).

See page 17

Submitted by: A Government Body or Representative

Allen, Doug *Alexandria, VA 22314* *8/21/2013 4:08:54 PM*

Virginia Railway Express

Subject: Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

See attached letter.

See page 19

Downs, Tom *,* *8/27/2013*

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Subject: Metro - Comments on TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

See attached letter.

See page 22

Farmer, Lee *Alexandria, VA 22314* *8/23/2013 3:00:36 PM*

City of Alexandria

Subject: RTPP Comments

See attached file

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Submitted by: An Individual

Akins, Sabrina *Dumfries, VA 22025* *8/21/2013 9:42:31 AM*

Subject: Comments on RTPP

**NT3 (electric vehicle support): agree with all items except Priority parking.
**NT4 (Commute alternatives): More support for 'free' carpooling, known as 'slugging' by local & state governments. Lack of parking at easily-bus accessible commuter lots in eastern PW County = more residents driving solo. Stacked/garage parking repeatedly suggested by public, for reasonable ($40-60/mo) fee.
Also no tax/rebate incentive for people to take non-solo-car transit if employers do not offer any kind of parking or PubTrans benefit.
**I am neutral at this time about conversion of more lanes into toll/HOT lanes. I travel the I-95/395 corridor for 2 jobs. At this time, I believe the 24/7 HOV3 or HOT plan will require me to spend an ADDITIONAL 30mins in traffic to get to my PT SECOND job, which is only 2 miles closer than my FT job. I seldom travel I-495, so I can't speak to how those HOT lanes work, except that I see few cars on the weekends in them. I CAN say I tend to avoid Rt267/Dulles Toll Rd with perhaps 1 trip every 2 years.

Andrews, Karen *Dumfries, VA 22025* *8/16/2013 10:44:47 AM*

Subject: Comments

I've lived in Northern Virginia since 1985. And although there has been some improvement in the public transportation system it's been an extremely slow process. The region needs a quality public transportation system for all residents. A good public transportation system serves all residents including the poor, elderly and disabled. I'd like to believe the new plan will serve the community and get us out of our cars.... The major problem with using what little public transportation we have is time - it's just too long to go from point A to B.

Anzelmo, Barbara *,* *8/13/2013 10:05:00 AM*

Subject: Priorities

Your priorities are NOT going to help traffic and transportation issues at all.

Repaving roads – that should fall under routine maintenance because it's always going to be an on-going event. It has to. It's not a priority, it's a necessity.

HOV HOT lanes will make traffic worse. Limited shoulders will create delays with any accident or break-down. I see cars switching lanes and cutting people off every day. This will only increase with 3 lanes to switch from. Are more lanes going to be built over the Potomac? Under optimal conditions, it will get you to the BACK-UP quicker.
50 miles per hour is guaranteed. What are the consequences for VDOT to us drivers if it doesn't happen?

Reality is simple : We need more highways WITHOUT lights to ease congestion. Until that is a priority and becomes a reality, your list is useless. It won't help one bit.

Bardin, David *Washington, DC 20008* *8/23/2013 12:43:51 PM*

Subject: Impacts on tree canopy due to soil compaction

Tree canopy impacts of needed transportation facilities need recognition. Please add ALL CAPS inserts in the Environmental section, as shown below:

Transportation infrastructure also has effects on water quality and open space
development AND TREE CANOPY. Many of the region's waterways continue to suffer from degradation, erosion, and pollution cause caused by stormwater runoff from roads and other infrastructure. SOIL COMPACTION LIMITS TREE ROOTS, TO DETRIMENT OF TREE CANOPY. In addition, transportation facilities often support development in previously un-developed parts of the region. Local and state governments have been putting programs in place to enhance and protect green space, recognizing the importance of preserving open space for farming, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Nevertheless, much of the farmland and open space remains open to development and is slowly decreasing as the region grows outward.

In order to meet our environmental goals, we need to continue to make efforts to meet and exceed clean air and clean water standards, increase the energy efficiency of our transportation modes, and support more stringent preservations programs to development of open spaces AND PROVIDE UNCOMPACTED SOIL VOLUMES UNDER PAVING TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE TREE CANOPY.

Barranca, Dominic *Silver Spring, MD 20901* *8/26/2013 8:35:43 AM*

Subject: We Need BRT on Existing Coorridors

Hello Area Planners,
I appreciate the hard work you do juggling different priorities, but I urge you to expand your vision and look to the future in your assessment of Bus Rapid Transit. Your current plan only references BRT as a component of interstate widening and pricing efforts, which is an inappropriate use of bus rapid transit and not sustainable from an economic development perspective. Montomery County is planning on using BRT to connect communities on Columbia Pike and 355 and other existing roadways to provide a sustainable and efficient option to driving. BRT on 495 does nothing to lure drivers out of their cars and encourage them to live in transit friendly locales. Please reconsider your plan and join with local planners in Montomery and elsewhere to make BRT an regional reality game-changing option for users. Thanks for your time.
Matt Barranca

Block, Alex *Washington, DC 20003* *8/21/2013 10:18:16 AM*

Subject: RTPP Comments

Generally, I think the approach here is a good one: focus on state of good repair first, ensure that land uses are appropriately matched to transportation
facilities, and so on.

However, the focus on expanding highways is misguided. Highways are inherently low capacity arteries (compared to transit), and justifying them as a
way to relieve congestion fundamentally ignores what congestion is. We cannot build our way out of congestion, we must price it.

A better approach would be regional congestion pricing. In other words, dynamic tolling of all major roadways in the area. We need to get over the aversion (and in some cases, legal restrictions) on tolling roads that are currently free, but congested. They are not 'free' at all, we all pay the toll of congestion one way or another.

HOT lanes to be added to existing roads is nothing but road expansion in disguise. The right approach would be to 1) toll the existing road; 2) assess if the toll reduces congestion sufficiently to avoid the need for additional capacity; 3) if and only if additional capacity is needed, the toll provides a revenue source for it.

I would also note that the additional capacity in the corridor need not be of the same mode. Indeed, it would be foolish to do so. For example, adding lanes
to I-66 inside the beltway is a fool's errand if the goal is to 'reduce congestion.' First, reduce congestion by pricing the road appropriately with demand. Then, add capacity by using those revenues to expand Metro (with an order of magnitude greater person-throughput capacity than an additional auto lane).

Half a century ago, the region had the vision for a 100-mile Metro system. We need a similarly ambitious transit vision for the future (and no, the idea of express buses along highway HOT lanes is not that vision). Dynamic roadway pricing of existing congested roadways is both a means to manage congestion and to raise revenue for needed transit improvements.

Buursink, Marc *,* *8/26/2013*

Subject: Bus Rapid Transit on Aerterial Streets

Please develop bus rapid transit (BRT) along arterial streets in Arlington, Fairfax, and in counties beyond.

Building BRT along new special use lanes on highways does not work. The funding for BRT is removed long before the extra highway lanes are built.

BRT lines benefit from easy pedestrian & bicycle access, which you have along arterial streets and which you absolutely do not have along highways.

The regional buses run by Fairfax Connector are clean & reliable, and would be ideal for BRT lines connection out neighborhoods and work places along the way.

Chin, Nancee *Manassas, VA 20109* *8/6/2013 11:24:04 AM*

Subject: RTPP Feedback

I applaud your efforts on improving commuting and transit in the region, and some of the improvements made to date are visible - however, do not currently have any positive impact on my commute from the Western Manassas area of Prince William County to the Tysons Corner-McLean area of Fairfax County. I have been continuously saying for at least a couple years that PRTC need to add buses to their schedule.
It is hideous that I have to not only sit in idle/ stop & go traffic on I-66 for 40 minutes to an hour daily, but I also have to waste an hour of my life daily waiting for a bus to come take me to the Manassas area. There is absolutely no <valid> reason why there isn't a bus leaving West Falls Church (soon to be Tysons II) at 3:30 PM. WMATA provides more frequent service starting at 3 PM and PRTC needs to follow suit. I'm ready to sell my home and leave the area - there is a significant lack of effort into making commutes along I-66 more commuter-friendly for the Western Manassas area. I've seen continuous improvements being made for Warrenton, Haymarket and Gainesville areas, but nothing of noteworthy benefit for Manassas Metro-Direct commuters (bottom line - need to start 30 -40 minute service intervals starting at 3 PM). I am open for further discussion, and thank-you for the opportunity to respond. Regards, Nancee M. Chin

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Crim, Stephen *Washington, DC 22209* *8/23/2013 11:33:14 AM*

Subject: No to HOT-Lane Transit, Yes to Pricing

While I strongly support road pricing in order to reduce congestion and raise necessary revenue, I believe that we should apply it to all highway lanes, not just HOT lanes as described in LT1. Evidence from existing HOT lanes do not yet clearly produce congestion reduction. Also, I am strongly in favor of Bus Priority (OG3), but I am dubious about the bus service described in LT1; experience with the 495 Express Lanes and the Inter-County Connector lead me to believe that local agencies will not actually provide express buses over the medium and long term. I do strongly support LT2, however. I do not support NT2, as these projects are likely to induce more automobile trips, negating any congestion benefit.

Currens, Michael *Frederick, MD 21702* *8/10/2013 6:23:28 PM*

Subject: Comments

Enhance public transit - buses and metro where applicable. Light rail would also make a fine link with Montgomery county.

Dunham, Stephen *Fredericksburg, VA 22407* *8/14/2013 6:32:08 PM*

Subject: RTTP

I am against spending any more on highways. The transit projects look good.

Gramm, Robert *Middletown, MD 21769* *7/31/2013 6:38:46 AM*

Subject: Comment on RTPP

The RTPP appears to be a well thought out plan for improving regional transportation. I strongly agree with priority given to improving I70 in Frederick; and improving I270. Both of those interstate stretches suffer from extremely high congestion.

Grant, Lorrie *Manassas, VA 20112* *8/19/2013 4:17:30 PM*

Subject: VA Hwy 234 Dumfries-Manassas

Please do not widen VA Hwy 234 any further. It has gone from two lanes to now four and the noise, especially from trucks, is incredible as well as a nuisance to residents who have to struggle to fall asleep due to the heavy rumbling -- and who wake up to such noise. The road is nearly in our backyards. This must stop! Trucks should no longer be permitted on the road, and certainly the road shouldn't be expanded.

Hatton, Jeffrey *Montclair, VA 22025* *8/14/2013 8:18:02 AM*

Subject: HOT and buses

It amazes me that HOT lanes are not directly addressed in your plan.
HOT will add capacity for part of the north-south commute. But it will also dump thousands of hybrid drivers into the regular lanes when the HOV exemption ends. Some people assume that hybrid drivers are rich and will pay for HOT usage, but I believe that's a major mistake.
Part of the plan for a switch to HOT was a promise to include new and more buses, bus routes and additional commuter parking. But with all this HOT construction underway, where are the promised bus plans and parking lots? It takes years to fund, procure, design and build these. And they will be needed very soon. But they have not been discussed by - let alone budgeted by - any of the various regional commuting and highway boards.

OmniRide is well run but very limited in its scope. thousands more people would ride OmniRide if additional routes were offered. Personally, i would love to dump my car and take a bus. But the only options available to me would increase my commute from 35-45 minutes each way to 60-90 minutes each way.

Hollins, Lea *,* *8/6/2013 12:05:00 PM*

Subject: Regional Transit Issues

I did not read the entire 85 page report but plan on doing so soon. But from the little I read, I am at a total loss of understanding.

A sampling of 41 people for an area the encompasses millions of people…..Really??? Where is the big picture? That is flawed and no way a representation of millions of people.

1. People of Prince William County are “trapped” there on weekends unless they want to spend a significant sum to take a taxi to the nearest metro station in Springfield.
A. When is METRO going to head south. This should have been a priority 25 years ago.
B.When is Bus Service going to run on the weekends to the nearest metro station until A is resolved?
(Don’t say it’s not profitable – it won’t be until it’s available and running and people can avail themselves of it).
2. The COST is prohibitive. I just started driving to work again. I also moved to FAIRFAX from PRINCE WILLIAM because there is BUS service to METRO on the weekends in MOST AREAS. I am starting to drive again because its cheaper for me to drive to work than take metro. It costs me $40 to fill up my HONDA CIVIC, I pay $3.65 for METRO BUS from Braddock Road to the Pentagon and either 1.60 or 2.10 to National Airport from there. Taking the low cost scenario I pay $10.50 per day to ride the bus from Fairfax County. The COST is even more prohibitive from PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY. By driving, I still have a half a tank of gas on Friday. My parking at work is only $100 per YEAR.
3. There are area’s of FAIRFAX county that do not have BUS Service on the weekends and this loops back again to (B) above.

MOST Metropolitan areas have public transportation AVAILABLE on the weekends.

I moved here from Atlanta, where I was able to buy a weekly pass that allowed me to ride the BUS and TRAIN as often as I needed with no ADDITIONAL COST. There was no stupidness such as RUSH HOUR/EXPRESS BUSES – Charge MORE during those times. Establish regular everyday bus routes, evaluate and adjust how often they need to run and set up a plan to maximize and/or minimize passenger load.

Make a plan to entice people to park their cars and take public transportation…..it’s not rocket science.

James, David *Washington, DC 20003* *8/23/2013 2:52:01 PM*

Subject: RTPP

Please focus more on mass transit and non-motorized modes and less on further overbuilding unsustainable highways (even if sugarcoated with illusory and transient "bus rapid transit").

Joy Madden, Jenifer , 8/23/2013

Subject: Comments on RTPP

Vice Chair Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission but comments here are my own

In general, by emphasizing multi-modal transportation, the RTPP is going in the right direction, but I have some general observations about areas in need of improvement.

Further emphasize pedestrian-centered planning

It especially important to continue encouraging “Complete Streets” type programs throughout the region which place the pedestrian at the center of planning where the health and safety of the individual is paramount. For this reason, I suggest that you alter your core goals to list quality of life (or “personal well-being”) as Number One, followed by environmental stewardship and economic opportunity.

Anticipate impending technology

The TDP is too quick to suggest that adding lanes is a good way to alleviate congestion. Indeed, upcoming breakthrough technologies might transform the current motorized transportation picture.

As you touched upon only briefly, connected vehicle technology will maximize roadway efficiency by enabling not only cars, but also trucks, buses and trains to communicate directly with each other and the infrastructure around them. The USDOT reports that CV technology has the potential to “prevent the majority of types of crashes (up to 80%) that typically occur in the real world.” The technology will also enable drivers to make informed decisions which will reduce travel delay and ease congestion. Drivers will save time and fuel by avoiding unnecessary slowdowns and stops. CV technology will make public transportation more appealing by giving travelers a realistic idea of transit arrivals and travel times.

The USDOT has been working on CV research since 2011 and is wrapping up its 2-stage research process this summer. y the end of this year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will determine whether to proceed with the technology and if it should be required in all new vehicles.

A parallel federal transportation research project is also underway using CV technology to optimize traffic signal control that is projected to reduce traffic delays by 25% and congestion up to 40%.

Cooperative Adaptive Cruise Control, also being tested as we speak, is predicted to have “transformative effects” by allowing drivers to travel closer together on the roadway and therefore “get greater productivity out of our highway resources” by increasing throughput by 50% per lane. That means 50% more vehicles could travel safely on the same stretch of highway than can travel safely now.

Because of all these impending transformative technologies, decisions on roadway expansions should be delayed whenever possible.

Go with Scenario B

Transportation planning around activity centers is a great improvement over HOT lanes not only as a way to preserve valuable land and obviate the need for long-distance SOV driving, but to increase compact economic development and improve the health of individuals by providing more opportunities for walking and cycling.

I’m all for bus rapid transit, but not when it’s running on inaccessible, land-consuming HOT highways. The TRB should emphasize a regional network of BRT on arterial roads as a first thought not an after-thought. More attention should also be paid to encouraging jurisdictions to provide more neighborhood bus service connecting to Metro stations.

Push protected bike lanes and protective bike laws

Thank you for considering cycling as a viable transportation option. Lowering vehicle speed limits may be the most effective way to improve both walking and bicycling safety.

In addition, please emphasize providing protected lanes which are separated from motorized traffic whenever possible. Also encourage jurisdictions to pass stop-at-crosswalk laws (as opposed to yield in crosswalk laws in the VA) throughout

the region.

Kalis, David *Woodbridge, VA 22191* *8/21/2013 6:50:05 PM*

Subject: transportation plan funding

Four of the 14 priorities require either billions or hundreds of millions of dollars. I've been a budget professional with the federal government for over 20 years, and to not address the budget realities in the plan is a failure. Many want to see improvements in our infrastructure, but are either unwilling to change priorities, or adjust the funding schemes. It's my opinion that government, local, state, and federal, should not build new infrastructure if they are incapable of funding the repair and sustainment of the current
infrastructure.

We all want a better commute, but the fiscal realities of large scale infrastructure projects will be prohibitive for years.

L, Sharon *woodbridge, VA 22191* *8/20/2013 2:17:23 PM*

Subject: suggestions

See attached

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Lainhart, Leonard *Manassas, VA 20112* *8/21/2013 9:01:46 AM*

Subject: Out of Area Traffic

It appears that the board that set the priorities has completely omitted or ignores the issue of Out of Area traffic that contributes a large percentage to the congestion. The concept of adding a 95 by pass through Maryland and southern Virginia would go a long way in reducing the congestion on our area roads.

Malinowski, Mateusz *Washington, DC 20001* *8/23/2013 9:32:35 AM*

Subject: Promoting Wider Highways under the Pretext of Better Transit

Dear TPB,

I just read on Greater Greater Washington that the RTPP includes a plan for widening highways and tolling the extra lanes under the pretext of promoting bus rapid transit (http://greatergreaterwashington.org/post/19955/brt-is-great-but-highway-buses-arent-brt/).

If that is the case, I would encourage you to look at local precedents where this has been proposed but quickly cut back as the ridership did not meet expectations: the ICC buses come to mind.

Instead, please look at bus rapid transit that is working: the Orange Line in Los Angeles. That line connects to a heavy-rail subway into downtown and runs in its own dedicated lane through a mix residential and commercial areas. This is the kind of infrastructure that should be foremost in our plans, not endless highway widenings.

I hope you reconsider some parts of the RTPP in favor of transporation proposals that benefit the highest numbers of people, rather than the highest numbers of cars.

Respectfully,

Mateusz Malinowski
Washington DC

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martin, larry *washington DC, DC 20011* *8/23/2013 2:41:24 PM*

Subject: Comments on RTPP

see attached

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McCauley, Moira *Washington, DC 20009* *8/23/2013 5:00:55 PM*

Subject: More public transit, please!

I am pleased to see some focus on making our transportation networks more multi-modal. However, I'm concerned that expanding highways in the mid-term to add bus lanes will only increase demand for clogged roadways. Start with Metro, existing bus routes, and better facilities for bicycling and walking, and immediately take some of the pressure off the roadways. Many people who live within access of these other modes drive because the other modes are currently unreliable.

Merchant, Canaan *Falls Church, VA* *8/23/2013*

Subject: extra highway lanes

I was recently alerted by Greater Greater Washington regarding a meeting the TPB had held regarding what planners envision for Northern Virginia's future transportation infrastructure. The article mentioned that nearly every proposal included extra lanes on the regions highways but tolled, like the recently opened 495 HOT lanes. I believe this would be a mistake on the part of planners and the region because of the following reasons:

1. It doesn't make effective use of our exisiting highway/road infrastructure. There is no technical reason we can't manage demand on existing highways by tolling the lanes that are currently there. Similarly for bus service the region would be better figuring out how to convert many of the regions arterial lanes into transit lanes which would speed up transit and make it competitive with driving.

2. We unfortunately live in a world with limited resources and devoting money towards new lane miles faces the problem of diminishing returns much quicker than a similar investment in transit, and in today's economy we simply don't have the money to pick both. Moreover, in Northern Virginia we already have the textbook examples (Arlington, eventually Tysons Corner) of how transit can be leveraged into more money for local governments via property taxes and we should continue on that path that has already influenced many several areas national and international transportation projects.

3. Adding new lanes is far more environmentally destructive (both in its construction and the environmental effects that most cars have) and is inequitable as driving is something not everyone is able to do or afford. Moreover, for those choosing to walk, bike, or take transit they are face with significant increases in crossing distances and increased risk to their health and safety.

If you look at the most successful areas in Northern Virginia, and the DC region at large you'll see that they are areas that have been able to provide high quality rapid transit that allows a great number of people to move around without the need for a motor vehicle and thus without the need for excessively large highways and arterial roads. Even Tysons Corner which boasts of two limited access highways (one of which was just recently expanded by four lanes) is adding rapid transit through its heart and will likely see even more in the coming years and decades. Better public transportation is what the region needs, not more lane miles and we already have the expertise and know how to accomplish this.

Oser, Jeffrey *Washington, DC 20002* *8/23/2013 6:06:02 PM*

Subject: Highway Capacity Plans

I would like to let it be known that I do not support an increase in highway capacity. Congestion mitigation funds should go towards transit, BRT & LRT on arterial roads within walking distance of dense areas (which are not highways). Everyone knows that latent demand always fills up new capacity, so the only way to lesson congestion is to offer alternatives to driving.

Overman, Aaron *Washington, DC 20001* *8/23/2013 4:42:24 PM*

Subject: Bus lanes

Bus lanes are great, but in a highway corridor they are a waste of dollars that could otherwise go to transit where far more people ride and are making buses part of a transit-oriented lifestyle.

The TPB should support bus lanes in urban arterial corridors over lanes in far flung suburban highway corridors. The most important project is to implement the H and I Street bus lanes in downtown Washington DC.

Palloni, Robert *Frederick, MD 21701* *7/31/2013 7:29:14 AM*

Subject: Roads in Frederick, MD.

Speaking to the road and bridge repairs in general I believe it is a good idea that was poorly implemented. For example the Rt 15N bridge over 26 in Frederick. The road was repaved, but the bridge is still pot holed and terrible. The re-paving of 15 is very nice, but not really needed when compare to further north on 15, above Thurmont. As for Safety, whose idea was it to change the intersection at Rt 15 and Willow Rd. Now you have even a worse safety issue because, now instead of making a left when accessing Willow Rd from Rt15N, you now have to make a U turn, cross over a lane and make a right turn without a right turn lane. It might be safer for the left turns, but now you have 55mph cars trying to slow down for someone making the right to get up to Willow rd. Let's speak a bit about the Rt 15, Rt 26 and Motter Ave congestion. I travel Rt15 S thru that area about 4 times a week in the evening (5 to 6pm) and there is always a backup, some is caused by the construction on Motter, but I feel some is caused by the amount of development that has occurred off of Rt26 without a substantial investment into the road access. Specifically, access to Rt 26 from Rt 15S. As it is now, we have to use Monocacy Blvd which isn't optimal. Well, this is my 2 cents for what it's worth. Please feel free to contact me if you want the get my nickel tour of the roads in MD.

Posey, Kevin *Alexandria, VA 22301* *7/30/2013 7:07:11 PM*

Subject: Survey flaw

I am concerned that this survey will encourage the continued flawed policy. It may be an oversimplification to say that this survey boils down the question, "Do you want to spend money to fix traffic congestion (yes/no)?", but not much of one. Obviously, the layperson will likely answer yes, but what good is that response? Every road capacity improvement in the metro Washington area has returned in 5 years to the poor level of service present before construction began. Even the Wilson Bridge is backing up into Virginia during the afternoon rush, and the last component of that project was just finished within the last year. How many more failures will it take to teach a lesson to those responsible for wasting taxpayer dollars on boondoggle highway megaprojects?

Quinn, Tom *Washington, DC 20015* *8/23/2013 9:29:04 PM*

Subject: RTPP

Please concentrate on improved public transportation with a focus on a separated Blue line and an upgraded Union Station which combined enable a significant increase in commuter rail service.

Also someone needs to lead the way on cross jurisdictional cooperation on transit service, particularly on Commuter rail and streetcars/light rail which need to cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Reading, Wiley *Washington, DC 20001* *8/23/2013 10:50:11 AM*

Subject: BRT Plan

The focus by area transportation agencies on Express Toll Lanes and their cost undermines good land use and regional investment in the most sustainable and effective approach: a regional network of transit-oriented centers and communities. More walking, biking, and carpooling trips, along with lower car ownership, and rapid bus transit on already established roads should be the priority focus of the TPB's Regional Transportation Priority Plan.

Rieben, Elizabeth *Woodbridge, VA 22192* *8/22/2013 10:31:28 AM*

Subject: RTPP Comment

This is a thoughtful plan that responds to pressing needs in a logical way. (Thank you for writing it in easy-to-understand language.) Buses are the unsung heroes in this story, however, and although I see they were not rated as high as other issues, I hope they get a lot of attention, especially for commuters in outlying areas beyond the reach of Metro. (PRTC Omni Ride deserves special recognition for on-time performance, comfort, courtesy, reliability, and just plain excellence, by the way!) Buses need special lanes in the city and around the Pentagon to separate them from heavy car traffic. Currently this is not the case. When people notice that it takes significantly longer to drive by single-driver car than to take the bus or Metro, people will move to mass transit. People stuck in traffic should see buses easily gliding by them at fast speeds, not sitting beside them in the same jam. That would be a greater incentive than paying people to try them. Buses also should be powered by natural gas or another clean fuel. Repairing highways is important – building new highways is counterproductive, so I was happy to see the emphasis in this plan on both mass transit and highway infrastructure. But I would really like to see clean-powered buses as more of a priority and single-driver cars less. One last observation – please impress upon highway officials that safety should be a priority when putting up barriers and other obstacles during road repairs. It is disgraceful what is going on – as an example - I-95 south and, previously, the beltway around Alexandria. It is as if officials are completely unaware of the fast moving cars – with people in them – around their work areas. In many places, there is no room for error and nowhere to pull off in an emergency. This is life threatening. What could they be thinking??

Schaeffer, Arnold *Washington, DC 20009* *8/26/2013 11:23:10 AM*

Subject: Goal LT1

Regarding LT1, Express Toll Lanes with Transit: BRT belongs on arterials; it will never work on highways. Please change this goal to focus solely on arterial BRT. We don't need more highway capacity, which would simply fill up in short order (induced demand).

Stewart, Douglas *Fairfax, VA 22030* *8/23/2013 8:17:46 PM*

Subject: Draft RTPP

I like many elements of the draft RTPP. I agree that maintenance and improvement of Metro should be a high priority. I really like the emphasis on focusing growth near Metro stations and encouraging compact, walkable development there. I'm most concerned about the express toll lanes scenario. Building express toll lanes will likely encourage further sprawl. If we want enhanced bus service express toll lanes are not the answer. We need to focus on improving service and creating dedicated transit lanes on urban arterials where they can encourage more residential/commercial/business development and create a virtuous cycle.

Tennyson, Edson L. *Vienna, VA 22181-3220* *8/19/2013 11:34:34 PM*

Ffx County Trans. Advisory Commission

Subject: Transportation Priorities

i-66 is the most congested highway anywhere around. It needs Light Rail in the reserved median to Centreville with eight stations along the way. Light Rail can reduce car-miles on the extension of rail service by 62%. A Task Force a decade ago determined this. For Wellington, Gainesville and Haymarket, the VRE extension now under study MUST be built. Widening i-66 to feed into a bottleneck is NO GOOD. Public opinion surveys and polls find almost two to one favor transit expansion over highway expansion. Bonds can help fund it. We must save oll and money. US 1, the Richmond Highway, needs Light Rail on single track in the median from Huntington Ave. Metro to Fort Belvoir then by ex-MIlitary RR to Newington and on to Springfield Metro, 21,422 weekday passengers at half the operating cost of Rex Bus service. Cut fatalities , cut transit cost per passenger in half. Free up mobility, add 51% to people capacity. Maryland needs The Purple Light Rail Line in the worst way. It too will move people for half bus cost per passenger. The investment is not a
cost, It is an Asset on the Balance Sheet and will earn a return by saving bus cost and oil and boosting property values.

The National Transit Data Base says Light Rail costs $240 per car hour = $16.84 per car-mile = 45 cents per passenger-mile with 38 passenger-miles per car-mile like Phoenix or Los Angeles. MetroBus costs $ 1.40 per passenger-mile Not good, unaffordable on busy llnes. Electric rail served areas save 200 gallons of motor fuel per capita per year, $ 2,150 per year per household. We need that saving and the cleaner air.

Weekes, Christiana *Woodbridge, VA 22191* *8/6/2013 11:25:33 AM*

Subject: Metro Rail or Bus Service to Woodbridge, Virginia

Please let us know when the metro rail or bus service will be extended to Woodbridge, VA. Thank you.

Whitaker, Stuart *Falls Church, VA 22043* *8/23/2013 9:55:30 PM*

Subject: RTPP

I commend the TPB staff for their work developing the RTPP and appreciate all that has been produced. I believe the following could make the plan even better:

1. Transit should be afforded parity with driving in terms of travel time and not in terms of dollars spent. Transit service today during rush hour is usually inferior to driving--I believe the objective should be to make the performance equal.

2. The emphasis today is on supporting work trips into the city. Transit should be seen as a 24/7 alternative to driving.

2. The TPB vision was adopted in 1998 and needs to be revised to reflect the externalities arising from driving, including CO2 emissions. The following
benefits of transit should be recognized as well:

- lower individual commuting and parking costs;
- the ability to read and write email, texts, and other messages and material as desired while traveling;
- the ability to engage in entertainment and other activities while traveling;
- lower fuel consumption per mile per capita;
- lower transportation infrastructure costs;
- better health from more walking and less riding in cars;
- better connection to local communities;
- increased social equity

3. I support long term strategies including concentrated growth with more transit capacity in Activity Centers (LT2), but I believe there are Near Term
opportunities to increase transit trips to locations that are currently well served by transit. Transit analytics can help identify such locations, and the result of these analytics can be used for target marketing and other marketing efforts.

Woodard, Omar *Philadelphia, PA 19144* *8/23/2013 11:05:56 PM*

Subject: Student Transportation

Where's discussion about transportation issues for students? It is expensive to travel across the DC metro area, especially for young people from low-income
families.

Submitted by: An Organization

, *McLean, VA 22106-6149* *7/30/2013*

Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

Subject: TPB Priorities Plan Fails to Prioritize

See attached letter.

See page 33

Buscaino, Mark *Washington, DC* *8/23/2013*

Casey Trees

Subject: Casey Trees' Comments - Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

To whom it may concern:

Casey Trees requests that the transportation priorities plan be thought of not just in terms of efficiencies of movement, but because our region's roadways represent such a large amount of impervious surface, how it can be constructed in a way to reduce impacts to the environment. Impervious surfaces create peaks in the hydrograph which scours streams and floods neighborhoods. They also create excessive heat and lead to unhealthy air conditions.

Streets that are designed (or re-designed) that allow for the growth of mature trees by providing for adequate space for tree's rooting volume is key. There are many technologies available now to approach this key issue – shown in Casey Trees' Tree Space Design Report (http://issuu.com/caseytrees/docs/tree_space_design_report).

Abundant canopy above our regions roadways provide multiple benefits – traffic calming, stormwater management, noise reduction, reduced ambient air temperatures, increased pavement life due to shaded asphalt and concrete surfaces - and many others. A transportation plan that incorporates green with the gray will result in healthier neighborhoods, healthier communities and ultimately a healthier regional population.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Coyner, Kelley *Arlington, VA 22201* *8/23/2013 1:56:24 PM*

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

Subject: NVTC Comments on the RTPP

Please see attached letter.

See page 34

Diedrich, Roger *Fairfax, VA 22031* *8/23/2013 2:53:41 PM*

Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter

Subject: RTPP comments

See attached file

See page 36

Edwards, Monte *Washington, DC 20002* *8/18/2013 6:19:48 PM*

Commitee of 100 on the Federal City

Subject: Importance of commuter rail

The comments are attached below as a PDF file

See page 38

Goffman, Ethan *Rockville, MD 20850* *8/21/2013 8:33:22 PM*

Montgomery County Sierra Club Group

Subject: RTTP

Focusing on maintaining Metro, the #1 priority in your poll, is a commendable strategy, since Metro is the heart of regional transit. To this end, completing the six year investment plan and moving full speed ahead with the Momentum plan are the minimum needed to be undertaken for Metro to fulfill its mission. The #2 item, highway maintenance, is also crucial for the region's future. Beyond that, it's necessary to expand transit, with streetcars in the city itself, the Purple Line eventually extending around the entire city, and a BRT network throughout the suburbs, to serve the demands of our growing population and of environmental needs. New road projects, however, will undercut these efforts, inducing more traffic and sprawl. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will shortly release its latest report showing climate change to be advancing more quickly than expected; new roads and sprawl worsen climate change in multiple ways.

It's also critical to build TOD around transit hubs, since land use and transit are flip sides of the same coin. Notably absent from the RTPP, however, is the east-west divide: much of the western region is overbuilt and will suffer from increasing traffic woes, but this building continues apace. Instead, new development, particularly high-quality jobs, should come in the eastern part of the region. To this end, MARC stations in Prince George's county could serve as TOD hubs, particularly if the MARC system is expanded to include all-day and weekend service. Unfortunately, the RTPP neglects the importance of commuter rail (and commuter bus).

Finally, pairing BRT with Express Toll Lanes likely means that BRT routes will take second place to automobile users. BRT routes should come first, since they will move a far larger number of people. BRT should be planned and built for its own sake, and paid for by a combination of tax money and fares, although perhaps a public/private partnership would work as well.

Green, Christine *Washington, DC 20003* *8/22/2013 10:35:40 AM*

Greater Washington DC Region Safe Routes to School

Subject: RTPP Comments

See attached.

See page 45

Schefer, Leo *Dulles, VA 20166* *8/23/2013 2:07:22 PM*

Washington Airports Task Force

Subject: Draft RTPP

The Washington Airports Task Force appreciates this opportunity to comment on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP).

See page 47

Schwartz, Stewart *Washington, DC 20002* *8/23/2013 5:49:10 PM*

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Subject: RTPP

attached

See page 62

Slater, Tina , *8/23/2013*

Action Committee for Transit

Subject: Action Comm for Transit -- Comments on Draft RTTP

Action Committee for Transit, a Montgomery County-based transit advocacy group, submits the following comments re the TPB's Draft "Regional Transportation Priorities Plan" (RTTP):

1. How will the RTTP "drive" the planning process? Projects in the CLRP have been studied extensively and already have a funding plan by the time they make it to the TPB for approval. How can we get on the "front end" of the planning process to influence (i.e., "embryonically") the CLRP projects?

2. Creating effective links between land-use and Activity Centers should be the goal. Widening highways should not be the "go to" solution and should be put on the back-burner until transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure have been fully deployed. We are seeing the nascent glimmers of BRT (Arlington, Alexandria, Montgomery County) in the region. But if we promote a "network" of arterial roadways served by BRT, not only do we connect our existing Activity Centers, but we'll also access the most ridership since the Activity Centers are exactly where the Region's growth is expected to occur. Activity Centers with their mixed-use development provide an opportunity to live, work, and play within one community – where people have a "choice" to move about by walking, bike, bus, or car. BRT networks on arterial roadways can significantly reduce the number of car trips per household.

3. Non-automotive travel not only reduces congestion, but serves to improve the Region's air quality, a requirement of the Federal Clean Air Act. Expansion, where feasible, of commuter rail such as MARC and VRE must be pursued. Using existing interstate lanes for Express buses can be implemented in lieu of highway widening (and many of these buses?>> are traveling at capacity today). Other alternatives for commuters like carpool, vanpool, park-and-ride lots, telework can be promoted even more than they currently are (these are low-cost solutions). Increasing the cost of parking (or reducing the supply) is another effective tool for changing the habits of commuters and promoting more transit ridership. Building more Complete Streets encourages more pedestrian and bicycling activity, which contributes to non-automotive travel. These low cost solutions to roadway congestion need to receive higher priority before spending the region's very scarce resources on highway widening.

4. Include the WMATA Momentum Plan; it is a plan for the Region. It is a great example of (and perhaps the only?) plan that is funded across jurisdictional boundaries and hence a truly "Regional Transportation Plan."

5. Combining various jurisdictional plans does not a Regional Plan make. Who will ID the "trans-infrastructure" needs that reflect population projections, job growth, etc. across jurisdictional boundaries?

6. Cost/Benefit is not discussed --- this is a critical performance measurement tool. Cost/Benefit to the Region might be a way of distinguishing the projects that should rise to the top of the RTTP.

Still, Steve , *8/27/2013*

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

Subject: CAC Report on the RTPP

See attached letter.

See page 67

Comment on other regional transportation issue.

Submitted by: An Individual

Barcia, Grace *Quantico, VA 22134* *8/13/2013 9:06:53 AM*

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

Subject: Commuter Buses in th future to Russell Knox Bldg.

I was wondering in the near future is Potomac and Rappanhannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) will ever be coming to this particular area for government personnel working in Stafford County/Fredericksburg area off of I-95 and Route 1?

Please advise if this is in the budget for future endeavors. I would like to submit this question to the RTPP and PRTC. If possible would like to recieve response via e-mail. Thank you for your time and effort.

Grace H. Barcia

Barrett, Janice *Arlington, VA 22201* *7/2/2013 9:11:00 AM*

Subject: Linton Hall Metro/Manassas Metro PRTC buses

Next year we have been informed that the Linton Hall Metro and the Manassas Metro PRTC buses will no longer service either Vienna Metro or West Falls Metro stations. We will be forced to go to Tysons Metro station and use the Silver Line to commute into areas between Tysons and DC. Everyone on my bus (Linton Hall) is very upset about this change. I work in Arlington. This change will add at least a half hour or more to my already long commute. It will also be more expensive. I want to get onto the Metro as soon as possible. The traffic on 66 is terrible. I prefer to go to Vienna Metro station, but West Falls was OK. I assume money is driving this change. Riders on my bus are already looking for alternate ways to get to work. We are also talking about boycotting the bus line. This action is not for the benefit of the riders.

Johnson, Maureen *Manasssas, VA 20112* *8/14/2013 2:10:52 PM*

Subject: Bus Schedules

I have been commuting on the Dale City to Crystal City route for years. I have my fare subsidized by my office. But I do not ride the bus because of the awful schedule. I see state department/downtown DC buses run abot every 3-6 minutes and we have none between 6:15 and 6:45 am. There are about 3 around 6 am. can't you move ove of these out to 6:30am so that others can use these services? I just don't understand why they come over 30 minutes apart.
There should also be a direct trip from Horner - Crystal city with Pentagon being the last stop instead of the first. This is unfair for crystal city passengers.

Marsh, Carol *Fairfax, VA 22030* *7/25/2013 10:36:00 AM*

Subject: Widening of Rt. 1 through Ft. Belvoir should make improvements for people on bikes.

I bicycle in northern Virginia, and I write to express deep concern over the current proposal to force bicyclists to ride alongside full-speed traffic on a 14 foot wide outside lane along Route 1 through Ft. Belvoir. This widening project presents ample opportunity to do better.

As you know, this portion of roadway is part of US Bicycle Route 1, which runs the length of the east coast from Florida to Main, and therefore is an important thoroughfare for bicyclists nationally, as well as regionally.

This project should include bike lanes. If it will not include bike lanes and will instead require the sharing of an outside lane between fast-moving motor vehicles and bicycles, that outer curb lane should be at least fifteen feet in width to allow for safe sharing as such highway speeds.

Either option would be am improvement for bicyclists and for overall roadway safety, and would not require additional overall width.

Thank you for your efforts to improve transportation in our region. Please ensure that bicyclists are considered and made safer by your efforts by including bike lanes or sufficient width for bicyclists to share the roadway at the proposed speeds.

Morel, Stan *Prince William County, VA* *8/6/2013 6:03:00 PM*

Subject: HOV FIX

The number of accidents are mounting each year, due to people changing lanes. If the HOV lanes, and soon to be hot lanes, were to operate like the Bay Bridge, there would be far fewer accidents. There would be no lane changes until you got to a passing lane.(Cautions Area) Say the far right lane would not be occupied 1/2 a mile before an on ramp. After passing the on ramp 1/4 of a mile, the far right lane would be open to all, but they must stay in all lanes for 5 miles. At that point they would have passing lanes for one mile, and then no passing for 5 miles.This would be for all lanes on the HOV. You don't like the HOV RULE don't use the HOV. But with all of the accidents and people losing their life,. I think it is time to try something new.

People are so rude today when they get behind the wheel, someone needs to change their habits

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Ponder, David *,* *8/21/2013 10:05:00 AM*

Subject: Transportation Public Comment

I live in the Dumfries area and have been riding the Omin-Link bus from route 234 for the past 3 years. It is time to build a fly-over to connect Route 234 directly to the HOT lanes that are being built. The HOT lanes that will exit directly onto Route 610 will not ease this congestion as more traffic will be on the main line as a result of changing the rules to drive in the HOT lanes from what they are currently in the HOV lanes. In addition, the Potomac Shores housing community will be adding 4,000 housing units in the Dumfries area along with several new apartment complexes. The current infrastructure and planned infrastructure for this are will be overwhelmed before the additional housing is completed. It is imperative that this issue be addressed and high time that the metro rail is extended to Stafford County. Whatever the detractors may be, the benefit would surely outweigh them. In the event of a National emergency, the current infrastructure along the I95-South corridor would be a death-trap.

Reynolds, Sandy *,* *8/13/2013 11:02:00 AM*

Subject: Reversed Bus Routes

I would like to suggest that the evening PRTC OminRide buses be re-routed due to the high-volume of traffic beginning on I Street, continuing onto 15th Street near the Treasury Department, and finally ending at the last stop across from the Agriculture Department. If bus routes were reversed, (i.e., leave the district via the Memorial Bridge) making the State Department the last stop; the issue of being stuck in D.C. for an hour before reaching 395, would no longer be an issue, as the buses would be going against traffic.

Being stuck on the bus for more than an hour, makes for a really long and uncomfortable ride home -- especially when there are no restrooms on the bus.

August 23, 2013

Scott York, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Suite 300
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

Dear Chairman York:

On behalf of the motoring public, AAA Mid-Atlantic is pleased to present its comments and recommendations on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP). The RTPP is the "culmination of a multi-year effort to identify the best strategies for addressing the region's most pressing transportation challenges."

We concur with the overall thrust of the RTPP, which is to identify and focus our region on "near-term, ongoing, and long-term regional strategies that offer the greatest potential for addressing regional challenges and that the public can support." We applaud the report for addressing both road and transit needs and for proposing long-term strategies that are actually workable and realistic and improve both roads and transit.

We appreciate the report's emphasis on regional strategies. Unfortunately, the focus of many stakeholders has become too parochial and provincial. Our transportation woes are regional in nature and by structure, and the task of maintaining a focus on regional transportation needs and strategies must fall to the TPB.

Given the intractable problems that we face, it comes as no surprise to us that maintenance of the region's highways and transit system and infrastructure has emerged as the top priority in the RTPP, which will serve as a long-term blueprint for transportation planning, decision-making and execution.

The incessant gridlock that we face daily adversely impacts our quality of life, our social vibrancy, and in the real world, it harms our economic vitality and viability. For example, the 2012 Urban Mobility Report from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) once again shows that our region suffers from the absolute worst traffic congestion and delays in the entire nation.

Each of us loses 74 hours a year of our precious time that we can never regain, and each of us wastes 37 gallons of costly fuel a year, while idling away our days stuck in traffic. The extended mean commute time for area drivers is 33.9 minutes, according to the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 1.9 million commuters drive alone with 68 percent of them leaving after 7 a.m. In the D.C. Metro area, 2.8 million people commute to work. A 2010 "State of the Commute" study conducted by Commuter Connections provided a snapshot of the nature of the commute. It

revealed that 68.5 percent drove to their destinations alone, 15.5 percent traveled by rail, 7.5 percent took a vanpool or car pool, six percent hopped on the bus, and 2.5 percent walked or biked.

At AAA Mid-Atlantic, the polling we do to guide our advocacy for the nearly 900,000 Washington area members regularly sends us the same message: area motorists not only want good roads, but, overwhelmingly, they also want transportation choices – including strong mass transit options. Both rail and road systems must work well together for us to improve regional mobility.

For this reason we strongly applaud and support the long term strategies—both A and B – proposed in this report that would improve both roads and transit. We think that Virginia has blazed the path and demonstrated that through public- private partnerships that utilize toll revenue, we can make major progress in the fight against gridlock and for mobility. This serves as a model for facilitating a venue for BRT projects in our area that ultimately serve both motorists and mass transit users well. Express toll lanes, paid for by users through the tolls, can both facilitate mass transit improvements by creating a BRT network, while also directly attacking our near-worst-in the-nation congestion. And they can be funded by users.

Given the magnitude of the congestion and the challenges that we face, they cannot be solved in our own little bailiwicks, but will require big solutions employed regionally, which is what we believe the RTPP is proposing through its goals and strategies. Given that the future of our great metropolitan area is largely dependent on the quality of its transportation system and its ability to move people and goods effectively and efficiently, we need bold, regional actions to solve them. Proposing to add express toll lanes on most interstates and on many arterial highways and linking them to provide an extensive regional BRT system is the kind of transformative planning than could change the transportation paradigm in the Washington Metropolitan area.

At a time when empirical studies of gridlock in the region, and in Washington, D.C., in particular, continue to show "more severe congestion that lasts longer and affects more of the transportation network," we need to work together in a collaborative effort to find the best of all possible solutions for all users and not to exacerbate congestion woes. We think the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan offers us a real-world, affordable, and plausible plan that will ultimately improve mobility for all system users from walkers and bikers to motorists and mass transit riders.

Submitted by,

Mahlon G. (Lon) Anderson
Managing Director, Public and Government Affairs

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August 21, 2013

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
The Honorable Scott York, Chair
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chairman York:

I applaud the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) efforts to address the impacts of growth on the National Capital Region and identify transportation strategies that best promote TPB goals through the development of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP). I support the RTPP aim to highlight those strategies that address the most pressing challenges the region faces in meeting our shared goals. With that overarching purpose in mind, I offer the following feedback on the RTPP.

The RTPP successfully outlines the key transportation issues and challenges that should be a focus for the region –transit options, a strong economy, state-of-good repair, safety. Absent, however, from the plan is a comprehensive discussion of the role that commuter rail fulfills in the region and its potential, as a component of a truly regional transportation *network*, to help advance TPB goals for economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Washington, DC has the highest daytime percentage increase in population due to commuters among U.S. cities and is third in the nation in terms of absolute numbers of people commuting into the city each workday. The region is perennially ranked among the top 10 most congested metropolitan areas in the nation in various surveys. Yet the region ranks well below other metropolitan areas such as New York and Boston in the use of commuter rail. This indicates tremendous potential for an expanded commuter rail system to play an even greater role in meeting regional mobility needs.

Specifically, inclusion of a strategy to expand the region's commuter rail network is warranted in the RTPP, especially to address mobility needs in its outer reaches. Metrorail's frequent service and close station spacing is best suited for short- to medium-length trips in the most densely developed areas. Commuter rail, with its greater station spacing and peak period operations, is best suited for longer distance trips of 15+ miles from the less densely populated suburbs to the urban core. In the case of VRE, it also functions as feeder service to Metrorail with nearly 25% of riders transferring to the Metro system to reach their final destination. In northern Virginia, the greatest percentage future population increases are projected in the

outer suburbs of the National Capital Region, such as Prince William County, and the outer ring communities just beyond the TPB planning area where commuter rail infrastructure is already in place. Expanding commuter rail infrastructure and capacity makes sense in those markets and can be accomplished sooner and at a lower relative cost than pursuing other travel options that require extensive right-of-way acquisition and construction of new infrastructure.

Crucial to maximizing commuter rail potential is the expansion of rail capacity across the Potomac River between DC and Virginia (i.e., the Long Bridge). A capacity investment such as that supports long-term needs for both passenger rail and freight, generates significant mobility and other benefits to the region, and helps to move closer to the integrated regional/commuter rail network that is common to metropolitan centers such as New York or Philadelphia. The RTPP is the appropriate forum to advocate for such a priority.

The specific discussions in Chapter 2, Goals and Challenges, and Chapter 3, Strategies, do not convey the multimodal nature of the region's existing transit system or discuss the breadth of regional options that can contribute towards creating a regional transit network. In the outer reaches of the National Capital Region that are not served by Metrorail or Metrobus, local bus, VRE and MARC are the primary transit options. The VRE share of peak period trips in long-distance markets, such as Broad Run/Manassas to the L'Enfant Plaza area, is over 50%. Commuter rail's ability to support future population and employment growth is also challenged by crowding during peak hours and rail capacity constraints. Any discussion of regional transportation goals and strategies should highlight commuter rail as an integral component of a regional network, especially at the region's periphery.

The contributions to the region's economic competitiveness by all transit modes operating in the region should also be reflected in the discussion of RTPP goals and strategies. Enhancing commuter rail capacity and addressing passenger-freight rail bottlenecks contributes to maintaining the region's economic competitiveness. Capacity improvements that allow for reverse peak commuter rail service by VRE and/or MARC run-through service to Virginia can provide opportunities to "sell the same seat twice" and move closer to an integrated regional/commuter rail network. Enhancing multimodal connections between commuter rail and other modes at core activity centers, such as L'Enfant/SW Federal Center or Crystal City where major redevelopment is envisioned helps to support a strong regional economy as well.

Finally, while expanded transportation options are crucial to respond to future growth, the need to maintain the existing system in a state of good repair is equally important. The state of good repair needs of all transit modes in the regional system are understated in the RTPP. As other transit modes often function as a connection or feeder to Metro, failure to address their needs can become a barrier to greater overall system performance. The state of good repair of all regional modes and its link to system performance should be emphasized with respect to RTPP goals and strategies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the RTPP. If you have any questions about them, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Doug Allen
Chief Executive Officer

DA:cmh

cc: VRE Operations Board
Kelley Coyner, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
Al Harf, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
Marty Nohe, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Ron Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning

August 27, 2013

Mr. Ronald F. Kirby
Director, Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE – Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Kirby:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors commends the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on its draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) that recognizes the important role of Metro and transit in the region. As the TPB works to finalize the Plan, we ask that consideration be given to recognizing the progress that Metro has made in rebuilding the network, and also the progress made by the local jurisdictions to strengthen transit services in the region. Please accept our suggestions in this letter and staff comments in the attached in your further deliberations.

We are encouraged by the results of the public participation process that resulted in the identification of "Transit Crowding" and "Metro Repair Needs" as the top two transportation concerns in the region, and "Metro Maintenance" as the strategy with the most public support. These results reaffirm Metro's importance to the regional transportation network and provide demonstrative proof of public support for continued reinvestment in Metrorail, Metrobus, MetroAccess, and local bus infrastructure.

Additionally, we want to thank the TPB for ensuring that many Metro 2025 initiatives from Metro's strategic plan, *Momentum*, were made available for public evaluation through the RTPP planning process, including Eight-Car Trains, Core Station Improvements, and Bus Priority. We want to express our appreciation for the invitation for Shyam Kannan, Managing Director of Planning, to present these and other items to the TPB Technical Committee in the fall of this year. Work is already underway to prepare the documentation and presentation materials.

As we mentioned, in recognition of the rebuilding work that has been done, we ask that you consider strengthening the draft RTPP

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202/962-1234

By Metrorail:
Judiciary Square-Red Line
Gallery Place-Chinatown
Red, Green and Yellow Lines

A District of Columbia Maryland and Virginia Transit Partnership

documentation to acknowledge these efforts and note that the dedicated funding Metro has received for rebuilding the system has been invested wisely. Metro also would like to call to your attention the numerous strategies articulated in Momentum which support the RTPP's overall goal of promoting a regional transportation vision that is safe, well-maintained, and financially feasible. We request that you work with Metro staff to consider incorporating the ideas and/or strategies into the final RTPP.

We also request the report and related presentation materials be updated to include details on how the results of this plan will be used in the future, including specifics on how it may support the inclusion of new projects – including *Momentum*'s Metro 2025 initiatives -- in the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP).

Please find attached a list of our staff's technical comments whose inclusion would strengthen the RTPP documentation and help make a stronger case for continued reinvestment in Metrorail for the benefit of the Washington metropolitan area.

Sincerely,

Tom Downs, Chair
Board of Directors

Attachment

Attachment 1:

Metro Staff Technical Comments on RTPP Documentation

Metro planning staff appreciates the opportunity to submit the following technical comments on the RTPP.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose

We recommend that this chapter be strengthened to describe the role that the RTPP will have in the future of the region, specifically how it might influence the project submission/selection process for the CLRP.

Chapter 2: Goals and Challenges

Since adoption of the TPB Vision, the region has made much progress on each of the six vision goals. There are many opportunities in this chapter to demonstrate the progress that the region has made towards these goals. Examples of the many milestones reached over the last three years include:

- Goal 1: The region has made progress in expanding the reach and reliability of the regional transit network, including the Silver Line, the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), and Metro's Priority Corridor Network improvements.

- Goal 2: The regional core has virtually exploded in the past several years and is likely healthier than it has been the last forty years. This growth is due to a combination of factors including increased transit service, new development around transit and innovative transportation alternatives such as ZipCar, Capital Bikeshare, and Car2Go.

- Goal 3: WMATA GM/CEO Richard Sarles recently announced that Metro has reached the half-way point of the extensive rebuilding MetroForward program and has closed or submitted for closure nineteen out of twenty-seven National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations.[1]

- Goal 5: Metro has continued to "green" our Metrobus fleet, with average fleet fuel efficiency increasing over the past seven years.[2] Metro recently signed a five-year contract with North American Bus Industries (NABI) for the procurement of up to 654 low-floor, alternative fuel vehicles.

- Goal 6: After the first of the year, Metro will begin the first phase of the Silver Line service with phase two, which will extend beyond Dulles International Airport, planned for 2018.

[1] http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/news/PressReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=5531
[2] http://planitmetro.com/2012/09/27/metrobus-fuel-efficiency-on-the-rise/

Spotlighting these accomplishments would illustrate Metro's progress towards achieving the TPB Vision's goals.

Chapter 3: Strategies

Many of the strategies listed have many beneficiaries. Often, the documentation of "why we should do it" focuses on only one type of user or one mode. We recommend that this chapter be strengthened by taking a more multi-modal approach to discussing the benefits of the different strategies, including:

- NT1: Improved access to transit would go far towards increasing transportation options for persons with disabilities.
- NT2: Alleviation of bottlenecks would provide benefits to bus customers and operators.
- NT6: Expanded bicycle infrastructure could increase non-motorized access to transit.
- OG1: The title "Metro Maintenance" deemphasizes the needs of Metrobus, MetroAccess, and local bus operators.
- OG4: Increased roadway efficiency would be beneficial to buses and streetcars as well as motorists.
- OG6: Updated, enforced traffic laws could benefit transit as well, including enforcement of new and future bus-only lanes and right-turn restrictions in front of buses.

Any improvements to traffic flow would also benefit surface transit, and any benefit to surface transit would increase the transit level of service and decrease transit crowding, the concern ranked #1 through the planning process.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Based on "Table 15, Relationship Between Challenges and Strategies," it appears that there are many other vital connections that could be made. For example,

- NT1 – Transit Access could improve G1C4 - Unsafe Walking and Biking and G4C2 - Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety.
- NT2 – Alleviate Bottlenecks could improve G1C3 – Inadequate Bus Service
- OG3 – Bus Priority could improve G1C2 – Transit Crowding.

It is unclear how this mapping between challenges and strategies is used. If the rankings of the challenges influence the priority of a strategy, the top ranking of Transit Crowding should improve the priority of Bus Priority if the relationship were established.

Metro's review of the RTPP documentation has identified many opportunities to establish new links between challenges and strategies. As such, additional strategies to address transit crowding could be elevated into a higher priority level, such as Bus Priority.

Methodology

We would also suggest consideration of the following questions in the final version of the plan:

- What is the term of the purpose of this plan? Is it expected to influence regional transportation spending over the next five years? Ten or twenty?
- What process was used to identify the possible strategies evaluated through the public participation process? Metro's Regional Transit System Plan (RTSP) has identified the need for new Metrorail lines through the core to significantly increase transit capacity in the region while other jurisdictions are moving forward with light rail, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and streetcar projects: how were these transit-expansion strategies removed from consideration?
- The document currently does not incorporate a robust discussion of and recommendations for specialized transportation services (i.e. MetroAccess). How does TPB plan to use the RTPP to focus attention on the critical need for a regional approach to specialized transportation service delivery, especially given the large cutbacks in locally-sponsored services over the last decade?
- How did the rankings of challenges and strategies result in recommendations and priorities? For example, how did the top challenge, "Transit Crowding," get assigned to the "Priority Two" tier?
- What role did non-public stakeholders play in the development of this plan?
- How is this plan expected to influence future Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) project selection?

Comments from the City of Alexandria, as submitted by Lee Farmer

General Comments:

- The draft RTPP provides a good starting point to help local and state governments make informed decisions on transportation challenges and implementation of priorities.
- Priorities can change from year to year, especially after an improvement is made. The draft RTPP notes that priorities should be revisited and updated on a periodic basis to reflect changes in the CLRP baseline, new land use developments and forecasts, and new challenges which will occur as new policy issues arise over time. Recommend adding a specific time to update the plan, ie every 4 years.
- With MAP-21, there is a new Federal focus on State of Good Repair (SGR). The RTPP focuses a great deal of attention on SGR needs for Metrorail. Though SGR is a major need for Metrorail, SGR is also an important need to regional commuter rail systems such as Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and MARC. In light of Federal mandates through the Rail and Safety Act of 2008 for Positive Train Control (PTC) measures and performance-based planning within MAP-21, the RTPP should have more focus on PTC and SGR needs for commuter rail as well.
- As a follow up to the comment noted above, the draft RTPP notes many priorities and strategies catered to WMATA needs, but priorities and strategies should equally speak to the entire regional transit network/agencies for rail, bus, and paratransit.
- As the draft RTPP moves forward, will there be more analysis conducted such as a cost-benefit analysis or return on investment analysis? Such analysis will help local and state governments set priorities and goals for projects.
- Should a sample size of just over 600 individuals (survey respondents) throughout the region set the priorities and strategies for the entire region? Are all priorities and strategies based on just information received via surveys or does this include input from all TPB member jurisdictions and others? This should be clarified in the draft RTPP.

Specific Comments:

- In the “Near Term” strategies section within the “IMPROVE ACCESS TO TRANSIT STOPS AND STATIONS,” page 27, recommend adding an item on the need for ADA passenger loading pads at transit stops and ADA accessibility in general for all transit facilities. Such improvements will also encourage some who currently use paratransit services to use fixed route bus services if the stops and access to stops and stations are accessible.
- In the “Long Term” strategies section within “SCENARIO A: EXPRESS TOLL LANES WITH BUS RAPID TRANSIT,” page 52, building express toll lanes on most interstate highways and some major arterial highways does not seem to be very cost efficient and cost effective, especially with new requirements for constructing additional lanes along new toll lanes within MAP-21. This scenario provides more incentives for individuals to travel via SOV and offers more competition to the regional public transit network. Also in order for this scenario to work, there would have to be new dedicated lanes constructed for bus to connect to activity centers which are located miles away from interstates and major arterial highways.

Sharon V L
Woodbridge, VA 22191
August 20, 2013

Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

Dear RTPP:

I have read through most, not all of your report and there seems to be a few areas that your report does not touch upon and that is Handicap access and availability to get parking in these commuter lots so that we too can enjoy a metro ride to work and your COOP plan for when there is a situation in the DC area and we need to move thousands of people, cars, buses, metro cars, and what have you out of the DC area to safety. Now I have seen this first hand having to work in DC and trying to get out DC when something happens and that my friend is a total embarrassment as we house the most influential people and organizations in this area and we cannot for the live of us work to solve this.

So here are my suggestion:

- ✓ Cut off all POV's coming into the city, have people go to the commuter lots in their respective communities and utilize the metro or bus system that is why we have them to cut down on congestion within the DC working area.
- ✓ Get those interstates out of DC have them go around so if a person needs to go from VA to MD then they have no need to travel through the DC area.
- ✓ Enhance the commuter lots to ensure that you can accommodate the vehicles especially the handicap, if you have to during peak hours have a little trolley vehicle go through the parking lot picking up people that has to park far away and get them to the door of the metro, safe and fast. Make little picnic areas within those parking lots so that people can gather and wait. Have trees put in with shelter to cover you from the rain or block some winds during the winter. Advertise to have people adopt a shelter and have their names put on it if they pay an upkeep charge of $50.00 a month or so that could possibly be tax deductible. (I do not know if that would fly with the IRS)
- ✓ With all the money that will be coming in from mass usage use that to enhance that metro and get it down to Woodbridge where it should have been 20 years ago when I was stationed out here.
- ✓ Make trolleys on the streets of DC to get people around quicker from office to office where they can get on and jump off at their stop like San Francisco. You can have a card like that SMARTRIP card and a machine on the trolley that they tap and they can buy a weekly trip pass for a couple of bucks that will help to pay for the upkeep of that service. NOT TO PAY FOR BONUSES FOR BIG CEO'S OR TO PUT SOMEONE ELSES KIDS THROUGH COLLEGE.
- ✓ This should cut down on ALL those taxi drivers you have here that to me causes more accidents and back log in traffic than the visitors do. They can get a job operating the trolleys.

Now you will still have some drivers in the city, like police, emergency vehicles, Big Wigs being driven around by a driver, delivery trucks, but just think about all the wear and tear you will not have on your DC roads from ALL those other vehicles because you have directed the pass

through traffic out of DC, you have taken ALL POV's, visitors and workers off the road and put them on the mass transportation systems.

Just think about what that means and envision that those garages that are not housing ALL those vehicles can now house a few mini buses or vans locked up so that when you do have a disaster you mobilize your vehicle force and get people out of danger and to safety without traffic being backed up from vehicles and people being strained because maybe the metro is acting up.

And lastly because I am handicap now you ask how will this help me while you do not have enough handicap spaces it seems for us to park up close to the entrance to any metro entrance that is why I suggested to have those little train cars they have at Disney that will pick you up in the parking lot and take you to the entrance. Make sure you make more seats at these places for us to rest and wait like others. Have designated places that are just for handicap to sit and wait so that we do not feel left out or that we are bothering others because we have to ask someone to move over so that we can sit. Have people walk around to ensure that these youngsters taking the mass transportation is not taking all the places like they do now because we are not teaching them manner's at a young age.

You are going to get a lot of people upset at this and done right mean about it but this is the age of change, we kicked and screamed about computers coming into play, we fought the cell phones, we fight anything new because that is human nature but if we do not start thinking outside the box and make change that will enhance our level of safety within our own capitol area how can we expect others to if we are not the leaders.

Sincerely,

Sharon V L
Disables and retired military
Did not put my full name because I did not want people sending me nasty emails like before when I submitted ideas.

Comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
Provided by Larry Martin, member, TPB Citizen Advisory Committee
August 23, 2013

Comments are organized under the following headings.

- The strategies and priorities identified in the draft Plan
- The RTPP planning process
- How the identified strategies and priorities should inform decision-making

The strategies and priorities identified in the draft Plan

The direction for regional priorities set by Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) is strategic and addresses the Regions key highest priorities – land use and mass transit.
The key aspects for a sound future in our Region include:

1) Focusing job and housing growth in Activity Centers, thus advancing walking & biking options for residents.
2) Connecting Activity Centers with public transportation
3) Insuring maintenance of existing road and transit systems

There is a perception that the RTPP does not establish priorities. This should be addressed by making a plainer statement of the RTPP priorities, such as enumerated above.

The RTPP second recommendation on transit crowding and roadway congestion is a very broad one that captures elements ranging from Metro capacity expansion to toll road construction. This is where some finer degree of further prioritization would be valuable. For this, analytical rigor, such as cost-benefit analysis would be useful. Metro core expansion is in my opinion essential; however, I do not have the data to rank it as a priority compared with development of an extensive toll lane network to support BRT.

There are good data sources supporting the planning of land use and transportation through activity centers. The opportunity to incorporate this information into the RTPP is missed and the plan is consequently less persuasive as a policy document.

In the third recommendation a "Complete Streets" policy should be given explicit mention to reinforce Activity Center planning, and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The same key recommendations made regarding the maintenance and expansion of Metro are also key elements of WMATA's Momentum plan. The RTPP should cite Momentum and incorporate it by reference.

It is essentially a false and misleading distinction to group features of the identified priorities under different scenarios. Encouragement of Activity Centers and mass transit are mutually reinforcing. The seemingly arbitrary separation for purposes of identifying public preference is contrary to the need for integrated regional planning. Frankly, it's just a weird idea, and should be eliminated.

The RTPP planning process
The RTPP planning process is weak in describing how strategies were identified, and priorities selected. Citing sources such as the TPB vision does not authenticate why some ideas were selected as strategies and other not. Although public outreach, polling and opportunity for comment was quite good, this cannot compensate for what appears to be simply expert judgment in the drafting of the RTPP framework. If expert judgment is the source of the pre-outreach draft, it should be so noted.

The initial proposals for the RTPP emphasized a more quantitative and rigorous analysis of transportation options with assessment criteria in the selection of strategies and priorities. This was unfortunately lost in the execution of the final plan. Cost-benefit analysis should be incorporated in future implementation of this plan and the RTPP's use in identifying regional transportation priorities. Cost-benefit data informs public and elected decision-makers debate.

Recognizing transportation as contributing about a quarter of the greenhouse gasses generated in our region, and the contribution to global warming, should be clearly articulated as a driver for priorities identified in the plan. Compact development, more transit, bicycle and pedestrian options are all responsive to this concern; and this concern is increasingly driving decisions in all sectors of our society from land-use to insurance premiums.

In describing how strategies and priorities were developed on page 12 under "Developing the RTTP" there is one paragraph that references the substantial time and effort that went into the TPB Scenario Studies. This undervalues the importance of the Scenario Studies as providing substantive support for the arrangement of the RTTP and identification of strategies to be prioritized. I'd recommend that an appendix be created that provides the scenario pedigree for the selected strategies, and demonstrates the solid scholarship behind the scenarios

How the identified strategies and priorities should inform decision-making
The RTPP planning process is weakest in describing how the RTPP should enhance the Region's already established transportation planning process. It has been apparent from the beginning of this process that the RTPP can only help to inform the process. It is widely understood that although the TPB has authority to approve or disapprove the inclusion of projects in the CLRP, by the time projects arrive at the TPB there has already been substantial State or District commitment to the project, funding has been prioritized, and it's a done deal. Therefore, the RTPP's value and function must precede projects' arrival at the TPB.

Developing systematic changes to the Region's transportation planning process will require considerable dialogue among all regional planning entities. The TPB staff paper provided to the TPB CAC described how other MPO's use priority plans. It highlighted the very important function of promoting regional dialogue for establishing regional transportation priorities. The RTPP should serve this function at least, if no other.

Recognizing that not all projects scheduled for the CLRP will be necessarily "regional," and that there are projects that serve rather localized needs; all project should never-the-less be subject to a "regional lens" to understand the implication they may have on the larger region's land use patterns and transportation infrastructure.

The RTPP needs to be the regional lens that is used to drive decisions on land use patterns, and assigning priorities to Activity Centers. The COG has already liberalized the identification of Activity Centers, and there must be recognition under limited resource scenarios some Centers should be near term priorities while others are necessarily secondary.

To effectively use the RTPP there must be two necessary implementation steps.

1. The effectiveness of the RTPP is contingent on the ability to use it to measure proposed transportation projects against a standard – either relative or fixed. You cannot manage what you cannot measure. A scoring guide needs to be developed for use of the RTPP in evaluating how well proposed projects meet its priorities.

2. An annual RTPP meeting needs to be incorporated into the TPB calendar to evaluate all phases of transportation projects destined for the CLRP. The RTPP will be used as a lens through with all transportation project ideas are evaluated. The sole new rule for TPB with regard to the RTPP needs to be that no project is considered a candidate for CLRP until it has been reviewed PRIOR to a funding commitment at an annual RTPP meeting. The RTPP meeting should be obligatory for TPB members and DOT planners, and open to the public.

A final note – The RTPP should place greater emphasis on integrated regional planning that transcends jurisdictional boundaries. The plan should give greater priority to the strategies and ultimately the resulting projects that best meet regional goals (if not regional *needs*).

Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance Statement Regarding
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
July 17, 2013

The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance offers the following preliminary observations on the TPB's Draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

First, the Alliance commends staff for an incredible amount of work and public outreach.

Second, this document is part of process that spans more than a decade that was originally supposed to last 18-months.

Third, the Draft contains a number of goals and broad generalizations such as "fix major bottlenecks," "build express lanes," "expand quality transit," "promote activity centers" etc. But there are no specifics.

What are the bottlenecks that are most important to fix? What are the express bus routes with greatest regional significance? What specific investments are most important and will be those that this body and this region will be measured on over the next 20 years? The Draft does not say.

Hopefully, those answers are coming and coming soon. Otherwise it's difficult to see the point of this exercise.

Essentially the TPB Priority Plan seems to mirror its 1998 Vision Plan which is an Arlo Guthrie-Alice's Restaurant-like document – where you can get or find anything that you WANT (excepting Alice). However, what you CAN'T find in the Vision or in this Draft is a listing of the real, tangible priority projects or investments that we really NEED.

Strategies are not priorities. This region will never have the resources to fully implement all the strategies outlined in this draft. Never. So in what should it invest?

Two years ago a private sector group asked over 40 area transportation professionals to identify the most important regional investments. The result was a very specific list.

By definition, a priority plan identifies priority investments, not simply strategies. Until this body or some other entity produces a specific list of the most important investments this region will have no priority plan.

Hopefully this process leads to such discussions and consensus. Otherwise, again, it's hard to see the point of this ongoing investment of millions of dollars in staff and other resources.

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Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

August 23, 2013

Ronald Kirby, Director
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Mr. Kirby:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) for the National Capital Region. These comments have not been reviewed or approved by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) Board as the Commission does not meet in August.

As you know, the RTPP is a key tool for the Transportation Planning Board as it identifies priorities that should be funded and included in the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). Getting this right and having a strong consensus about the priorities depends in part on an efficient and meaningful comment period. I encourage you to permit additional comments beyond August 23rd.

Overall, the proposed priorities include important investments in the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), a key regional transit asset. We also note that the TPB survey also evidences strong public support for funding for reliable, safe, and efficient transit.

In addition, we encourage you to take into account the following comments as you complete the plan:

1) Incorporate local bus, commuter bus, and commuter rail operations from the Washington metropolitan region in the plan. Each system should be named in the RTPP and their significance to the overall transportation system should be explicitly called out in the RTPP. All modes and all transit providers in the region are integral to the region's transportation network.

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2) Clarify which strategies fall into each priority area (including the level of prioritization).

3) Provide metrics that quantify the benefits or projected impact of strategies to assist in investment decisions.

4) Take into account the evaluation of data on the existing express toll lanes in decisions to expand express toll lanes to “most interstate highways and some major arterial highways.”

If you have any questions about these comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kelley Coyner

Comments on the COG Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter
August 23, 2013

We are pleased with the bulk and thrust of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP), and with the many opportunities to provide input along the way as it has been developed. The Plan touches on many of the key aspects of planning a sound future for the Region.

For example, we enthusiastically support strategies such as:

1) Continued support for growth in Activity Centers for jobs and housing
2) Connecting as many of Centers as possible with public transportation
3) Supplementing these links with a robust bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
4) Additional attention to maintenance of existing systems, both road and transit
5) Greater flow of information to travelers on the systems' conditions, rules, plans, etc.

For the long-term, we are most supportive of Scenario B, and we would be highly supportive of efforts by COG to take a more active role in encouraging compact, mixed-use development near Metro stations and in priority Activity Centers, for example through an expanded Transportation/Land Use Connections program.

While there is much to support in the RTPP, the following are some observations on some possible shortcomings.

We have grave concerns about Scenario A, focused on Express Toll Lanes. Express Toll Lanes have had mixed results in this region and other parts of the U.S. We believe the inefficiencies of our transportation system are fundamentally linked to land use. Express toll lanes will not address our land use problems, and in fact could easily exacerbate the jobs-housing imbalance, auto-oriented development and exurban growth patterns that underlie our transportation problems. For enhanced bus service, we believe it would be much better to invest in specific urban corridors where the potential for increased ridership and place-making could work hand-in-hand.

We don't see any attempt to develop a means to influence land use patterns, which in this plan might look like assigning priorities to Activity Centers. Not all ACs are created equal, and it would be better to have the better ones approach their potential before resources are given to lesser ones. The region would benefit by having quality growth in the "preferred" ACs at an earlier time with a targeting of limited resources. This could permit results with lower costs to connect and maintain transportation links, for a better attraction to investors, businesses and workers. Just as realtors say location is the main factor in housing value, the same is true for the region in regards to growth. COG should care where (i.e. at which ACs) growth occurs.

There is a Goal, #5, to Enhance Environmental Quality, but it is focused only on air and water quality, areas that are covered by federal regulations, i.e. it is a goal to obey the law. There is no mention of Climate Change even though our transportation activities produce about 28% of carbon emissions nationally. And of course, this is not a topic that has been ignored by COG in other venues, in fact COG has been a leader on the issue. Climate should be a consideration in the design and construction of our regional transportation systems. Doing so, will no doubt shift us even further toward more compact development, more transit, bicycle and pedestrian movements.

There is no mention of the relationship of this plan to that of the DOTs of the major jurisdictions, or to their decisionmakers. Historically, these agencies make the real decisions, so has there been any change to that dynamic?

Roger Diedrich
Transportation Chair
3322 Prince William Dr
Fairfax, VA 22031
Rick Keller, Chairman, Mount Vernon Group
Arlington
Douglas Stewart,
Fairfax

Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter

The Committee of 100
on the Federal City

www.committeeof100.net

August 16, 2013

945 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202.681.0225
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Scott York, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street., N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chairman York:

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City is pleased to present comments and recommendations on the draft 2013 Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

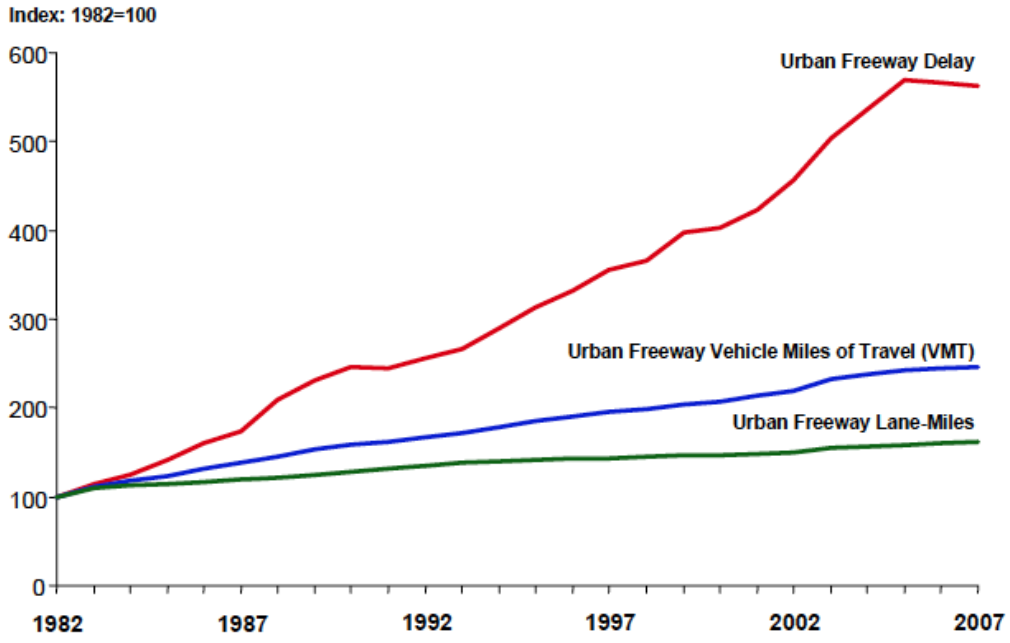
While we agree with your broad goals, we believe that you have missed a critical element in *Goal #1 - Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options and Goal #6 - Support Inter-Regional and International Travel and Commerce:* **commuter rail expansion and its relationship to the anticipated large increase in freight rail through the region.**

Increasing commuter rail is essential.

The Problem: One thing that gets overlooked in the discussion of various zoning, transportation, parking and pedestrian/bicycle safety proposals is that two-thirds of the cars on DC's streets during rush hour are from out of state and those cars impose increasing demands on parking and pressures on congestion. Of US cities with more than 100,000 residents, DC has the highest daytime percentage increase in population due to commuters, and in terms of absolute numbers of people coming into the city each workday, we're second only to Manhattan. Our car problem is largely a commuter problem and it's not one we can solve simply by helping people move around within the city. Our major challenge is getting large numbers of people in and out of the city efficiently. And it's a problem that will only get bigger in the future.

In terms of the percentage of those commuters using cars, trucks or vans, DC again has the highest percentage at 54%, compared to Manhattan at 13% and Boston at 50%. DC is the lowest in the use of commuter rail: DC 2.8%, Manhattan 11% and Boston 8%. Manhattan has just under three times the number of commuters

Figure 2.3 Mid-Atlantic Region Highway System Capacity, 1982 to 2007



Sources: Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Statistics, 1982 to 2007*; and Texas Transportation Institute, *The 2009 Urban Mobility Report*.

coming in each day as DC does, but more than 12 times as many traveling by commuter rail[1]. The Regional Transportation Priorities must include serious focus on how to expand passenger rail service into the District through MARC and VRE, as well as Amtrak. [2]

[1] US Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates:

	Total Commuters	Work in Place of Residence	Commute by Car/Truck/Van	Commute by Railroad
District of Columbia	773,735	220,409	420,454	21,523
Manhattan	2,334,100	769,884	321,070	270,690
Boston	555,227	209,100	278,990	44,295

[2] The MoveDC Plan Element on Freight, Maritime, and Railroads currently states:
"This element will evaluate the needs of freight in the District, its impacts to the transportation system, and recommendations for freight. In this element, data, facility, and route information will be evaluated to better understand the short- and long-term needs of freight, whether on rail or road. In addition, in the railroads section of this element, passenger as well as freight railroad needs will be evaluated based on Amtrak and freight railroad plans. Recommendations of this element will focus on maintaining efficient and effective freight access in and through the District, whether it is carried on road or by rail. Recommendations also will identify where coordination is needed between this element and others to reduce the impact of freight and other transportation modes on freight, within the transportation system. Freight and rail recommendations will be integrated with other plan elements."

The Approach: *The obvious solution is to separate freight and passenger rail operations in Southwest by building an additional Potomac River rail crossing to route freight traffic around Southwest and thereby enable existing rail facilities to accommodate greatly expanded commuter rail.*

Constraints to increasing passenger rail must be addressed.

The constraints that restrict increasing commuter and passenger rail are considerable:

• River crossings. Currently, freight, passenger and commuter trains compete to use the Long Bridge, the only Potomac River rail crossing within 70 miles, and also compete in sharing rail tracks in Southwest (SW). The proposed rebuilding of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel will greatly increase CSX freight traffic as a result of the expansion of the Panama Canal and the capacity of the ports of Norfolk, Baltimore and New York to accommodate those larger container ships. But freight trains will still have to come across the Potomac River.

• CSX restrictions. The current operating agreement for the Potomac River rail crossing at the Long Bridge precludes any increase in the frequency of VRE commuter trains. In the future, with the increase in freight traffic, that competition will increase, and unless there is a new rail river crossing, commuter rail traffic will be decreased. CSX refuses to disclose their expected increase in freight traffic, so the amount of additional river crossing capacity is not known.

• Electric versus diesel. MARC's Penn Line is electric, the Brunswick Line (that operates on CSX tracks) is diesel and VRE is diesel (as required by CSX). Because of the lack of electric catenaries in SW, AMTRAK has to change locomotives at Union Station to use diesel to the south and electric to the north. Electrification of the tracks south of Union Station is desirable for passenger and commuter trains, but opposed by CSX because of possible interference with their planned double-stacked container trains.

• Operational restrictions. CSX designs their rail lines for freight loads, not for passenger loads. Freight operations are typically slower and less time critical compared to passenger rail. As a result, signaling, scheduling, and basically all operations are optimized for CSX's freight operations. Rail operations would avoid conflicts and inefficiencies associated with the Long Bridge and shared rail operations in Southwest if commuter/passenger and freight rail were operated on separate networks.

Passenger and Freight Rail Operations Must be Separated. We need to figure out how to separate passenger and freight rail operation in Southwest and provide an additional Potomac River rail crossing. Most importantly, the study area for the Long Bridge Study needs to be expanded to address separating freight and passenger/commuter rail operations.

The proposed rebuilding of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel will greatly increase CSX freight traffic as a result of the expansion of the Panama Canal and the capacity of Norfolk, Baltimore and New York to accommodate those larger container ships. But freight trains will still have to come across the Potomac River. In 2005, the Federal Railroad Administration issued its *Report to Congress: Baltimore's Railroad Network: Challenges and Alternatives.* Page 4-13 of the report projects that the number of CSX trains traveling between Washington and Baltimore will increase from 33 trains a day in 2012 to a

high of 56 trains a day in 2050.[3] This projection, performed in 2005, did not take into account the increased freight that will result from expansion of the Panama Canal.

Active Rail Lines within the District of Columbia

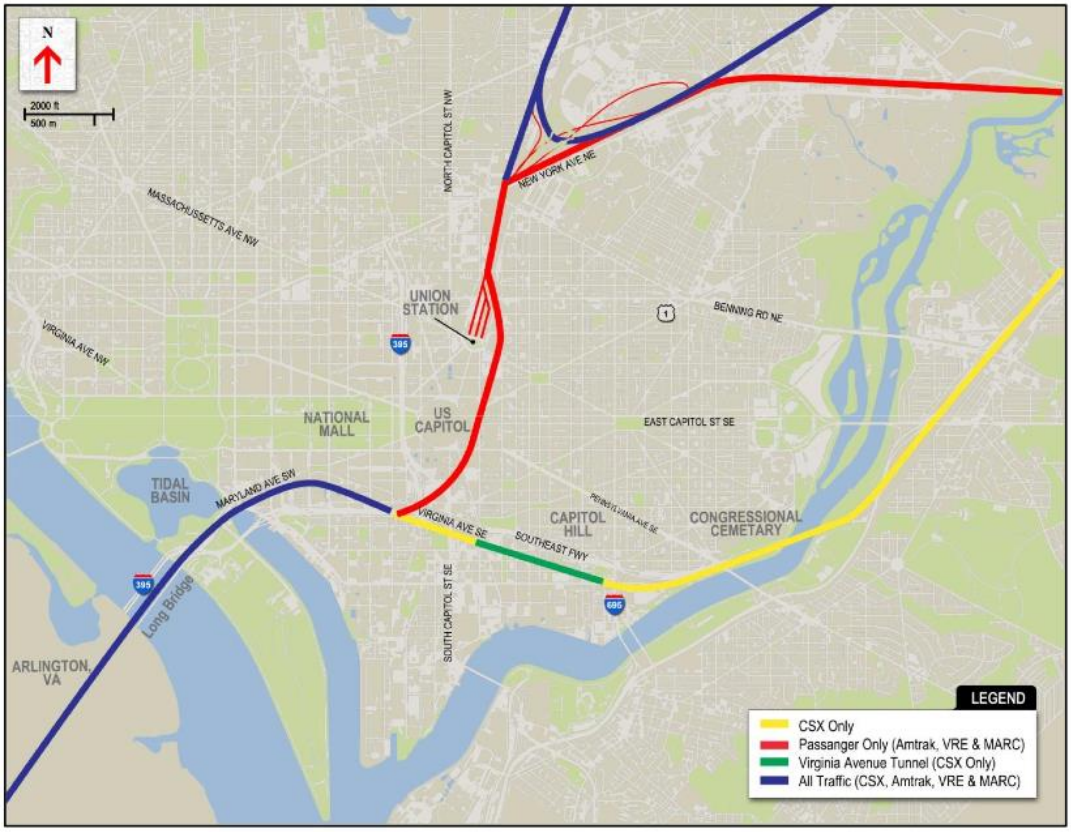


Table 4 - 5: Projected Annual Growth Rates in Freight Train-Miles

Time Period	Service Type							
	Premium		Unit		Merchandise		Local	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
2001 – 2007	1.23%		1.16%		1.19%		1.19%	
2007 – 2012	0.85%	1.36%	0.58%	0.93%	0.67%	1.07%	0.67%	1.07%
2012 – 2020	0.85%	1.36%	0.58%	0.93%	0.67%	1.07%	0.67%	1.07%
2020 – 2030	1.00%	1.61%	0.53%	0.86%	0.78%	1.25%	0.67%	1.07%
2030 – 2050	0.89%	1.43%	0.53%	0.86%	0.67%	1.07%	0.67%	1.07%

The projections in Table 4 - 5 reflect those provided by CSXT[12] by train type for the period 2001-2007. The post-2007 projections use, as their upper limit for the "high" case, the historical growth in tonnage for the Eastern Class I railroads (1.6 percent compounded annually between 1985 and 2001); this maximum growth rate is adjusted downward to acknowledge long-term increases in tonnage per train. The "low" case assumes growth rates on the order of two-thirds of the "high."

In this same time frame, the Union Station Expansion Plans is to triple the number of passengers and double the number of passenger and commuter trains;[4] and the SW Ecodistrict Plan plans to through-run MARC to Virginia and increase the commuter trains using L'Enfant Station.[5] That will result in a lot of competition for use of the Long Bridge and the SW rail tracks, and since those facilities are owned by CSX, it is likely that CSX will resolve that competition in their favor and thereby frustrate the proposed increases in Amtrak, VRE and MARC service.

In the *MidAtlantic Rail Operations Phase I Report* of 2002, CSX proposed an additional Potomac River double track bridge at a cost of $300 million (*Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Phase II Report,* December 2009 page 2-11)[6]. ***If a new river crossing (bridge or tunnel) could be located south of the present Long Bridge, freight would not have to come through SW[7], rebuilding the Virginia Avenue tunnel could be avoided, and freight and passenger/commuter operations could be separated,*** as is being done with the Howard Street tunnel in Baltimore.[8]

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[4] *Union Station Master Plan*, Washington, *DC* (July 25, 2012) Executive Summary, page 2. The southbound tracks at Union station will be designed for expanded commuter rail and Amtrak's Superliner equipment and equipped with an overhead catenary system to accommodate electric locomotives (*id*. page 11). Between 2018 and 2022, all new tracks will be provided that run through the 1st Street tunnel to Virginia and points south of DC (*id*. page 22). Future tracks could be extended to the south, enabling extension of high-performance, high-speed rail service to Virginia, North Carolina and the southeastern United States (id. page 13).

[5] The recently adopted *Southwest Ecodistrict Plan* proposes transportation strategies to achieve a "Revitalized And Reconnected Community." The Plan will "build on existing road, rail and bus infrastructure to enhance transportation capacity … and better connect all modes of travel." (page 13) The SWE Plan builds on the District's Maryland Avenue SW Small Area Plan in terms of an expanded L'Enfant commuter rail station that will serve Virginia Railway Express (VRE), Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) and Amtrak commuters with convenient access to the L'Enfant Plaza Metro Station with Blue/Orange and Yellow/Green Line service (page 31).

[6] Rebuilding the Virginia Avenue tunnel at that time was estimated to cost $117 million. That figure is now $165 million, or 41% higher. Escalating the 2002 cost of the additional Potomac River rail bridge by 31% would result in a current estimate of $423 million .

[7] The southern terminus of the Blue Plains tracks is Laboratory Road, SE, lines up nicely with the Potomac Generating Plan (GenOn) on the Virginia side. The GenOn plant has been decommissioned and is currently undergoing demolition and environmental clean up. The rail tracks that served that plant, apparently owned by Norfolk and Southern, are apparently still in use to serve the Robinson Terminal. The Blue Plains rail line joins the CSX rail line that emerges from the Virginia Avenue Tunnel and crosses the Anacostia at about 32nd and D St., SE. The Blue Plains ROW and most of the tracks still exist. The route is generally single track, there are several at-grade street crossings and certain short sections of track have been removed due to new, major streets, such as Malcolm X Avenue, Duncan Street, South Capitol Street and Suitland Pkwy ramps, 11th Street bridge, and Penn Ave. To accommodate the quantity of freight that would hopefully use this route, tracks would have to be upgraded and underpasses/overpasses would be required, or possibly, lowering the tracks and decking over them, like the SW tracks along Maryland Avenue.

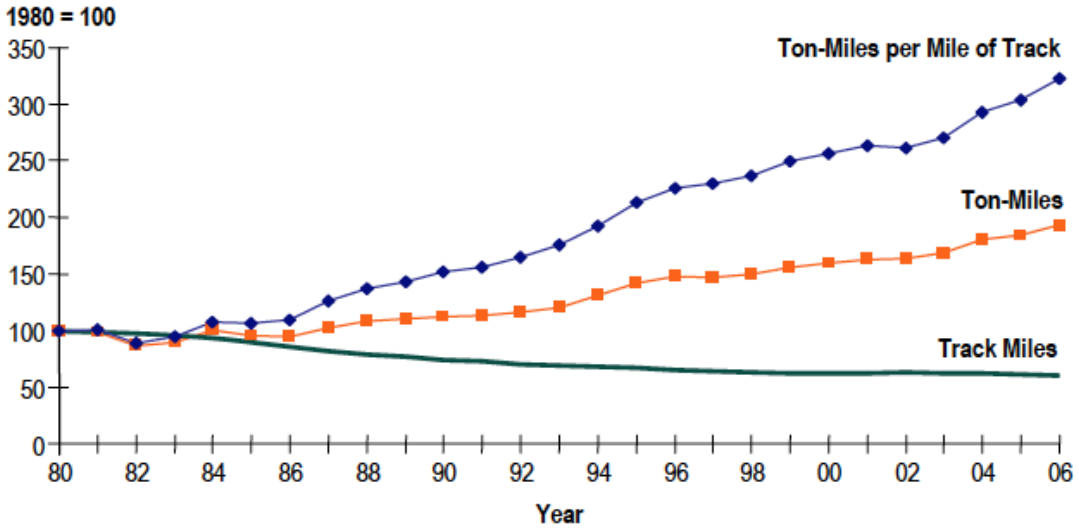
[8] *Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Phase II Report,* December 2009, states at page 6-

- Improving or replacing the B&P and Union tunnels, which provide access to Amtrak's Penn Station in Baltimore. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) study of the Baltimore tunnels suggests providing combined freight operations for CSX and Norfolk Southern in a replacement tunnel for the Howard Street tunnel. The passenger tunnel replacement for the B&P and Union tunnels would have grades and curves that would not accommodate freight trains.

And at page 9-3: "In the environment of Baltimore's topography and development patterns, the needs of freight

In the Draft EIS process for the Virginal Avenue tunnel, CSX has refused to disclose their expected increase in freight traffic, or to otherwise update the projections they provided in the 2005 Federal Railroad Administration *Report to Congress,* so the amount of additional river crossing capacity is not known, but will likely be greater than was projected in 2005. We do have historic data quantifying the amount of rail freight delivered along the I-95 corridor, but that data was historic actual, ending in 2006 and did not consider any projected increase in the amount of freight due to the expanded capacity of the Panama Canal that will allow much larger container ships to make deliveries to Norfolk and Baltimore, a large portion of their cargo would likely be delivered by CSX (*Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Phase II Report,* December 2009, page 2- 5):

Figure 2.4 Freight Ton-Miles and Track Miles, Class I Railroads, 1980 to 2006



Source: AAR and Annual Report Form R1.

Conclusion:

We can't solve our congestion problems unless we find a different way to get lots of people in and out of the city to work everyday. The congestion of the streets and bridges because of automobiles, trucks and buses is painfully obvious, and Metro is at or near capacity. By removing the constraints now imposed on commuter and passenger rail, we can move a lot more people into and out of the city. The major constraint is the combined freight and passenger/commuter rail operations in Southwest together with the capacity limitations of a single rail river crossing that today precludes any increase in the amount of

---

and passenger service differ so greatly as to mandate separate freight and passenger facilities. To attempt to meet the challenge with a single facility would likely result in compromises that would undermine the justification for any restructuring plan so designed. Indeed, analogous compromises made in the nineteenth century by two separate railroads, each developing a multipurpose facility on limited funds, produced the two inadequate facilities inherited by the railways of today."

commuter traffic. In the future, that problem will be greatly magnified, and we know additional commuter rail capacity will be needed.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the priorities for our region.

Sincerely yours,

Monte Edwards
Vice Chair

Cc: Ronald Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning
TPBPublicComment@mwcog.org

August 22, 2013

Chairman Scott York
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capital Street, N.E. Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman York,

On behalf of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership (National Partnership) and specifically the Greater Washington Region Safe Routes to School Network, I want to thank you for this opportunity to offer comments on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

As part of the National Partnership, the Greater Washington region network focuses on creating healthier and safer communities through policies that enable safe walking and bicycling as a transportation choice for children and families to and from school and in daily life.

We appreciate that several of the near-term, ongoing and long-term strategies include walking and bicycling as a form of transportation. There are a myriad of factors in mode choice and recognizing the comprehensive nature of walking and bicycling by addressing land use, Complete Streets, traffic law enforcement and workplace amenities is necessary. This integrated approach should be continued in the recommended priorities.

When strategies such as transit stations accessibility and increasing safety are employed, more people will choose walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation reducing road congestion and transit crowding. In this way, walking and bicycling strategies will aid in Priority One and Priority Two by increasing the mode share and reducing the strain on Metro and roadways. Many walking and bicycling project are also much less expensive than roadway projects.

We strongly suggest that while walking and bicycling infrastructure and updating and enforcing traffic laws to make roadways safer for all users were prioritized lower than highway, roadway and transit priorities, it is not overlooked that a disproportionate number of pedestrians and bicyclists die on our roadways each year. Nine percent of trips in the region are pedestrian and bicycle trips but pedestrians and bicyclists account for about 30 percent of traffic fatalities. While we have achieved successes in reducing motor vehicle fatalities, we have not achieved similar success in achieving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Safety should always be of the

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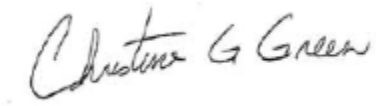
utmost priority, and a survey of the general public, while valuable, should not overrule sound data.

It is also important to not lose opportunities to include walking and bicycling infrastructure when repairing and or maintaining Metro, highway and roadway infrastructure. There are often easily attainable projects that can be added to increase the safety and ease of walking and bicycling.

I look forward to continuing to work with the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board to make walking and bicycling safer and to increase the walking and bicycling mode share in the region.

Sincerely,



Christine Godward Green
Regional Policy Manager
Greater Washington DC Safe Routes to School Network

Washington Airports Task Force
www.washingtonairports.com

August 23, 2013

The Honorable Scott York
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chairman York:

The Washington Airports Task Force appreciates this opportunity to comment on the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP).

In Summary

Strategies A+B raise two fundamental questions. Firstly, to what extent is it reasonable to expect unsubsidized highway users to subsidize transit? Secondly, how will transportation be improved for the vast majority of existing residents who do not live in Activity Centers and who will not have convenient access to transit?

With respect to the RTPP proposals, the Washington Airports Task Force (WATF) recommends:

1) Strategies A+B in the draft RTPP.
2) Creation of a new "Strategy C" to focus upon increased capacity for the region's entire highway network by addressing:
   a) Construction of the missing links, whose absence currently lengthens trips and forces traffic into chokepoints (which the draft RTPP does propose to address).
   b) The needs of inward commuters who are projected to increase from the current 300,000 per day to 750,000 per day by just 2030. If the inward commuting need is not addressed, the region should expect employers to move further out to be closer to their labor force and to see its focus on growth through Activity Centers undermined.

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3) That transit and highway strategies should be aligned with land use realities. Even by 2040, the vast majority of residents outside the inner core will have little access to transit that can provide an attractive alternative to the automobile. In the most populous county – Fairfax[1] – only 4.5 % of the population is within half a mile of a rail transit stop today (including the Silver Line stations under construction) – a figure which will increase to 7.5% by 2040, even with growth focused upon Activity Centers. Strategy A will help, but only to an extent.
4) Ways should be found to increase Metrorail frequencies and to connect existing lines in innovative ways, in order to increase capacity beyond the use of eight car trains.
5) As the draft RTPP recognizes, the cost of expanding rail transit is high, so most future transit likely will be road based. But, if the roads are congested, the transit is unlikely to be a viable alternative. The self-funding RTPP concept for BRT running in HOT lanes will surely help, but unless the capacity of existing rights-of-way is expanded, dedicated BRT lanes are not likely to be practical on the at-grade roads that form a significant part of each trip.
6) Commercial traffic: Whatever we have in our homes or workplaces reached us by truck, either directly or via a store or collection point. RTPP should add a truck strategy, as the region is in danger of creating a road network which bars much truck traffic from its principal arteries.
7) Policing: The RTPP should go further than its draft reference to clearing incidents and call for improved policing methods to significantly reduce the 20% of total highway congestion caused by law enforcement's handling of those incidents.
8) Energy Efficiency and Emissions: The focus on electric cars in the RTPP is too narrow and far from being the most effective strategy for the region. The lowest hanging fruit – increased highway efficiency, free-flowing traffic on the regional road system – constitutes the largest mid- and near-term savings for the region in the use of transportation energy, and thus in the reduction of transportation emissions.

   For example, increasing speed from 10 mph to 30 mph for gasoline-powered vehicles produces a nearly threefold reduction in CO_2 emissions and a similar increase in fuel efficiency.
9) Innovation: Promising concepts are under development that blend the virtues of transit and the automobile. Besides looking to BRT and digital communication, TPB should be asking: "What is the next evolution beyond the automobile and today's transit?"
10) Transportation is an economic throttle. Nobody travels for the sake of travel. They travel for the purpose at the end of the journey. Collectively, these myriad journeys make up the economy. The less time spent in travel, the greater a company's productivity and the higher the quality of life for the region's inhabitants.

    The economic, environmental and societal case for eliminating highway congestion in all but dense urban areas is compelling, as the cost of that congestion is higher than the cost of the cure for households, as well as businesses and governments.

Consequently, resolving the region's serious surface transportation deficiencies is of critical importance if the region is to sustain and expand its employment base, as well as sustaining its quality of life and expanding that quality of life more broadly throughout the region.

[1] Arlington and Alexandria have a higher percentage of access; Loudoun and Prince William less.

Detailed Comments

The Task Force's primary focus is aviation, but good aviation services don't do the region much good if people cannot easily get to the airports. So attention is paid to regional surface transportation.

It is noteworthy that major employers moving into the region do so to be close to their federal customer, but they also serve world markets. Where they locate in the region tends to be governed by access to the international gateway at Washington Dulles. About 70% of all new jobs created in the region over the last 30 years have been developed in localities with good, or once good, access to the region's international gateway.

The Task Force favors Strategies A+B in the draft RTPP and strongly recommends that a new Strategy C be created to focus upon increased capacity for the entire highway network.

The WATF appreciates that scenarios A+B are a noble effort to address the serious deficiencies identified by last year's Performance Analysis, while recognizing funding realities and the well-meant, but utopian, requirements of some TPB members and their supporters.

Strategy A notes: "A combined network of express toll lanes and BRT would produce benefits that neither approach would independently offer. The congestion-free travel lanes provided through a variable tolling system would be used by BRT vehicles to ensure predictable service. In addition, TPB studies have found that tolls collected on the express toll lanes will cover much of the cost of the new lanes and bus service. Such a system would substantially increase the travel choices offered throughout the region – both for transit riders and for drivers who are seeking congestion-free driving.

"Pairing the priced lanes with BRT services provides the potential for great synergy: variable priced toll lanes provide free-flowing running way for buses while toll revenues offset the cost of bus facilities and services. BRT services reduce the demand for the priced lanes, allowing them to operate more smoothly and carry more people with fewer vehicles. Both the BRT and priced lanes would provide incentives for travelers to choose more efficient travel modes, like carpools, vanpools, or transit, providing congestion relief to the existing general-purpose lanes."

However, strategies A+B alone do not adequately address the region's surface transportation deficiencies. Those deficiencies, as the RTPP report acknowledges in many places, must be addressed if the region's quality of life and prosperity are to be sustained, let alone improved for many citizens.

A+B also raise two fundamental questions. Firstly, to what extent is it reasonable to expect unsubsidized highway users to subsidize transit? Secondly, how will transportation be improved for the vast majority of existing residents who do not live in Activity Centers, who are unable to use HOT lanes, and who will not have convenient access to transit?

The 2012 Performance Analysis showed that:

- Highway congestion was projected to increase 78% by 2040, as lane miles would only expand by 7%. (A+B may slow the growth of congestion below 78%, but without strong focus on highway

network improvements, A+B likely will be insufficient to stop the hours of congestion experienced on the totality of our highway network from continuing to expand.)

- While employment would expand 36% to 4.4 million jobs, population is projected to increase by only 24% (the discrepancy clearly points to a major increase in inward commuting from the metro area's neighbors).
- Accessibility to jobs within a 45-minute commute would reduce from 1.3 million to 1.2 million by automobile, while increasing from 0.4 million to 0.5 million by all forms of transit (i.e. pre-RTPP transit plans will only make 11.4% of regional jobs accessible within 45 minutes).

The draft RTPP states that: *"Most daily trips rely on the automobile, and forecasts indicate this will continue well into the future. Congestion will worsen, as the capacity of highways will not meet the increase in demand" (*Page 17). This statement, coupled with the results of the Performance Analysis, highlights the need to do substantially more than scenarios A+B, if the current highway congestion is to be significantly reduced in order to sustain our region's quality of life and spread prosperity more evenly across the region, through the retention of existing employment and the attraction of new work opportunities.

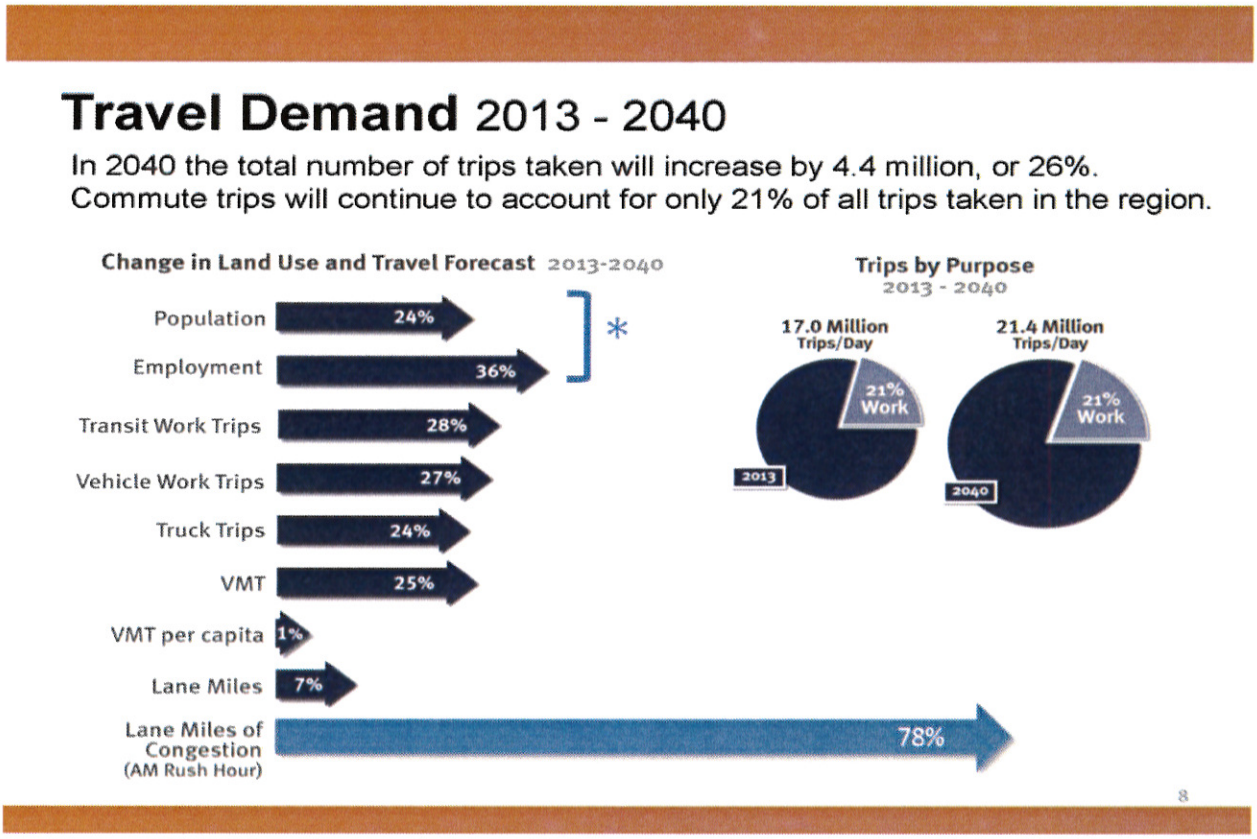


Chart source: TPB 2012 Performance Analysis with the top two and lowest bars highlighted by WATF.

Consequently, the WATF respectfully requests that the following factors be addressed in the final Strategic Plan through the inclusion of additional Strategy C, or by an explanation for their omission.

Land Use Reality v Transit Strategy

A total highway and transit strategy, Strategy C, should be developed for the omitted majority. Even by 2040, the vast majority of residents outside the inner core will have little access to transit that can provide an attractive alternative to the automobile.

The policy of attracting future growth to Activity Centers linked by effective transit is a sound policy, but on its own it is most unlikely to solve the region's worsening congestion problem, as it does not fully address the transportation needs of existing and planned land uses.

Rail Transit Limitations and an Opportunity

A Northern Virginia Regional Commission assessment measured the number of homes within a half mile and one mile of a VRE or Metrorail station in Northern Virginia today, and in 2040. In the most populous county – Fairfax[2] – only 4.5 % of the population is within half a mile of a rail transit stop today (including the Silver Line stations under construction) – a figure which will increase to 7.5% by 2040, even with growth focused upon Activity Centers. However, the households within one mile of a rail transit stop in Fairfax County is 18% today – a figure which is expected to increase to 24% by 2040. *This highlights the opportunity to create an attractive, all-weather people mover system to expand access to the rail transit system.* The methods implied in the strategy – walking and bicycling – are not likely to appeal to a high percentage of the population year round, due to the climatic extremes we experience during the course of a year.

Most Transit Expansion Will be Road Based

The cost of expanding rail transit is high, as the draft RTPP recognizes, so most future transit likely will be road based. But if the roads are congested, the transit is not likely to be an attractive alternative. HOT lanes in existing freeway corridors can facilitate the freeway portion of a BRT journey, but unless the capacity of existing rights-of-way is expanded, dedicated BRT lanes are not likely to be practical on at-grade roads that form a significant part of each trip. Based on the region's past history, few elected officials likely would vote to close existing highway lanes in order to dedicate them to BRT services. And if they did, Congress might well overturn them, as we have seen in the past with the Dulles Corridor HOV lanes.

Trucks

RTPP should add a truck strategy, as whatever we have in our homes or workplaces reached us by truck, either directly or via a store or collection point.

The TPB's Freight Subcommittee notes that: "The region's 4 million-plus population is a major consumer of goods and services. Given the region's service economy focus, many of the goods-movement trips are short and/or last-mile deliveries. To maintain the region's strong economy, it is necessary to have a reliable freight transportation network that can facilitate the consistent availability of goods. Suppliers, shippers, and consumers all rely on the efficient movement of goods."

[2] Arlington and Alexandria have a higher percentage of access; Loudoun and Prince William less.

The region seems to be in danger of creating a road network whose major arteries are denied to all, or some, commercial vehicles. For example:

- Trucks are not allowed on the GW and some other Parkways.
- Trucks with more than two axles may not use the 495 express lanes.

Households v Jobs

Over the last 40 years, forward thinking localities have worked to expand their commercial tax base, while pushing the housing to support the jobs created to other localities, in order to avoid the high service costs of households.

A George Mason University study conducted for the Task Force as part of a 2005 Airport Access Study showed that regional planning had assumed the improbable ratio of 2.2 jobs per household, when the reality for the entire metro area was 1.6 jobs per household. If the new focus on growth within Activity Centers works, the ratio may change to 1.8 jobs per household.

Localities like Arlington plan more jobs than households, and this increases the need for long distance commuting. While BRT running in HOT lanes along major arteries can help, many of the households in outlying areas are fragmented and in low density developments where conventional transit is not cost effective.

The land use plans for several localities are only likely to be resolved by significant highway improvements, possibly augmented by future innovative, more personal forms of transit.

Affordable Housing and Inward Commuting

The RTPP should address the growing volume of inward commuters.

There is unlikely to be sufficient "affordable housing" in the Activity Centers to support all the jobs that will be developed.

Today, approximately 300,000 people commute into the TPB's membership area from outlying areas. This figure is expected to increase to 750,000 just by 2030, according to a study conducted by George Mason University for the 2030 Group. Based on TPB's projection of a 36% increase in jobs, but only a 24% increase in population, the 2030 Group's figures may underestimate the impact of inward commuting. Few people choose a long commute; they end up with a long commute for economic reasons.

Unintended Consequences

Ironically, while the region's land use focus may be to absorb growth in Activity Centers, the market forces which force people to live outside the region will also cause employers to move further out, in order to tap the employment they need. That is another lesson of history which seems to have been lost in the MWCOG's philosophy behind the RTPP.

Rail Transit Capacity

Eight car trains will expand Metrorail's ability to help meet future demand, but the system also is limited by:

a) The necessity for all trains to run through the District of Columbia.

b) Limitations in Metro tunnel capacity under the Potomac River.

These two factors combine to reduce Metro's ability to provide rail capacity to match growth in Northern Virginia, and possibly elsewhere in the region. For example, the $6 billion investment in the Silver Line will be inhibited from reaching its full potential as density grows around its stations, because Potomac River tunnel limitations will limit the frequency with which Metro can run trains on the Silver Line. Similarly, a VDOT study of the I-66 Corridor infers that an extension of the Orange Line west from Vienna would be impractical, due to Potomac River tunnel limitations.

Has thought been given to creating a switch under Rosslyn to enable trains to run on Silver and Orange Line tracks without a train change to reach Crystal City, National Airport, Arlington and Alexandria on Blue Line tracks? Such a switch would be expensive, but it also would expand the capacity of the Metrorail investment, as travelers would no longer have to travel through the District and change trains in order to move from one part of Northern Virginia to another.

The potential may exist for other line links within the Metrorail system that could benefit travelers as well as capacity.

As transit is subsidized, transit projects impact the constraints inherent in the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). However, where there is a will, there is a way, as the Silver Line, Prince William's road system, and Beltway HOT lanes do show.

Missing Links

Our surface transportation system is a network. The missing links in that network should be addressed, as well as its chokepoints. Three examples follow.

Bi-County Parkway

Construction of the Bi-County Parkway (BCP) to extend Prince William's Route 234 Bypass from I-66 north to Route 50 in Loudoun County would reduce congestion on the few existing roads linking the two counties. For example, Route 28 is heavily congested, with the intersection at I-66 being the third most congested freight chokepoint in Virginia. Safety on Gum Springs Road and Route 15 is below the norm, and above Gilberts Corner, Route 15 should be considered a historic corridor to be protected. The solution is not just a better interchange between Route 28 and I-66, it is the construction of a better road network, of which the BCP would be a key element.

MWCOG's projection for growth in Prince William and Loudoun Counties by 2040 translates into an additional 400,000 north-south trips a day. This compares with the current traffic count on Route 28 on Dulles Airport of about 110,000 trips a day – a clear example of the need for completion of missing links in the road network, if chokepoints are to be eliminated.

Dulles Corner/CIT Road Bridge

Major Activity Centers are growing on either side of the Dulles Corridor at the entrance to the airport. Absent a planned bridge linking the two Activity Centers across the Corridor, traffic between the two will have to connect using Route 28. The added traffic volume will cause even a widened Route 28 to fail at its critical junction with the Dulles Corridor and the airport's entrance. This proposed bridge, which affects both sides of the Fairfax/Loudoun border, is a further example of a missing link relieving a chok point.

Potomac River Crossings

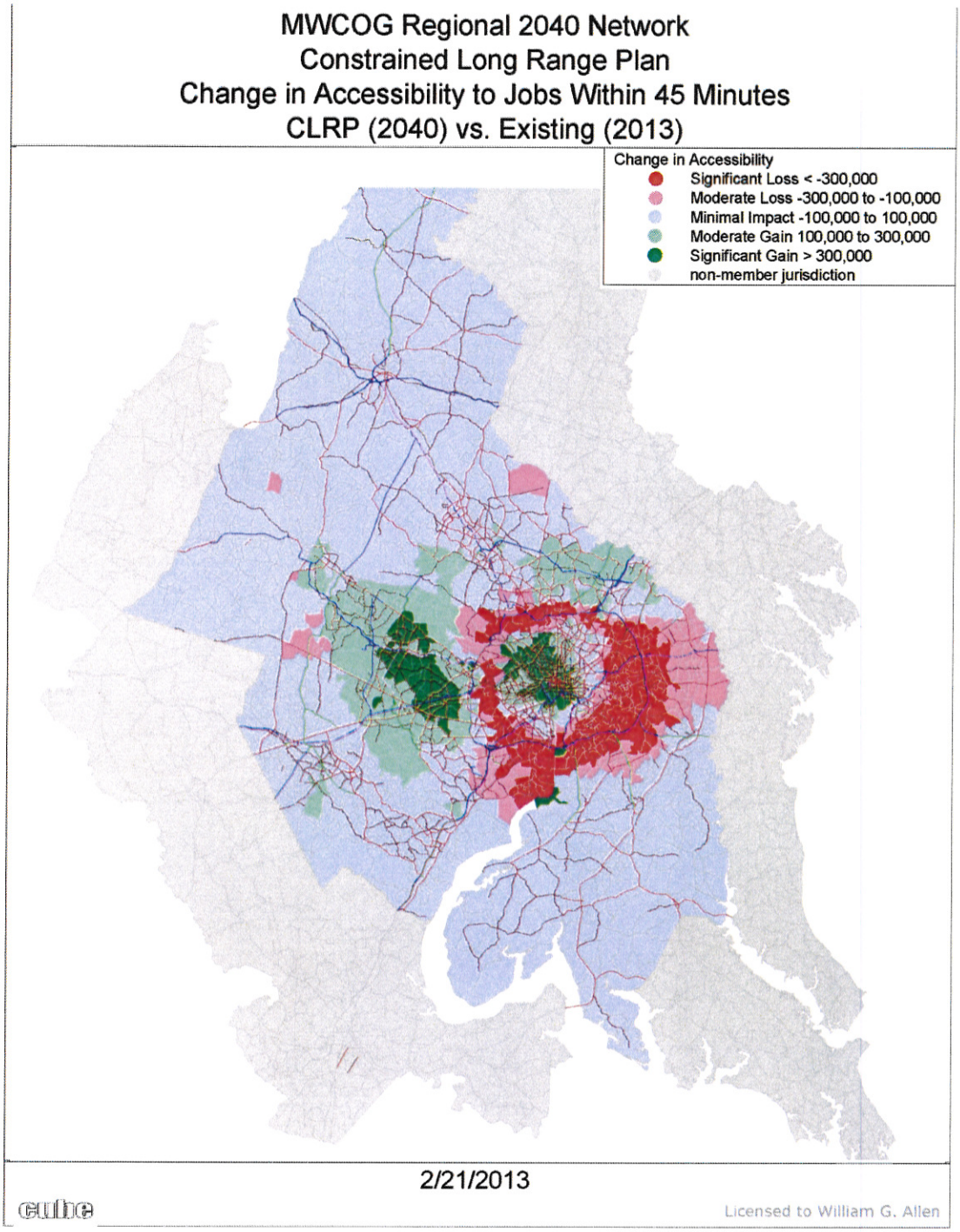
The absence of once-planned bridges across the Potomac creates a 35-mile tear in the western portion of the regional highway network. There are over 150,000 vehicle trips a day between Fairfax and Montgomery Counties alone, all largely focused on the American Legion Bridge, which has a finite life expectancy.

Use of the MWCOG transportation model indicates that two new Potomac crossings between Leesburg and the Capital Beltway would do more to relieve congestion in the Metro area's western arc than any other project. And, a financial study shows the bridges could be funded with tolls at reasonable levels. The Leesburg Town Council recently called for a new Potomac bridge between eastern Loudoun and Montgomery Counties. While a lightning rod for no growth interests, new Potomac crossings between Northern Virginia and Maryland should be part of the RTPP, either as projects, or as factual statements noting why they are not so included.

The absence of three once-planned Potomac crossings between Leesburg and the Capital Beltway is more than a "missing link" – it makes the Potomac a harmful barrier to the region's economic growth.

The thematic maps shown were produced using the same model and methods applied by the TPB to create its Performance Analysis. The maps show that the addition of two new Potomac River crossings between Northern Virginia and Montgomery County, MD would significantly increase the number of jobs accessible within 45 minutes, producing benefits in much of suburban Maryland, and even in the District of Columbia.

As the TPB acknowledges, the region is facing a worsening surface transportation crisis, so it would be surprising if the benefit to be gained from two new Potomac River crossings was not included in the TPB's strategy.


MWCOG Regional 2040 Network
Constrained Long Range Plan
Change in Accessibility to Jobs Within 45 Minutes
CLRP (2040) vs. Existing (2013)
Change in Accessibility
Significant Loss < -300,000
Moderate Loss -300,000 to -100,000
Minimal Impact -100,000 to 100,000
Moderate Gain 100,000 to 300,000
Significant Gain > 300,000
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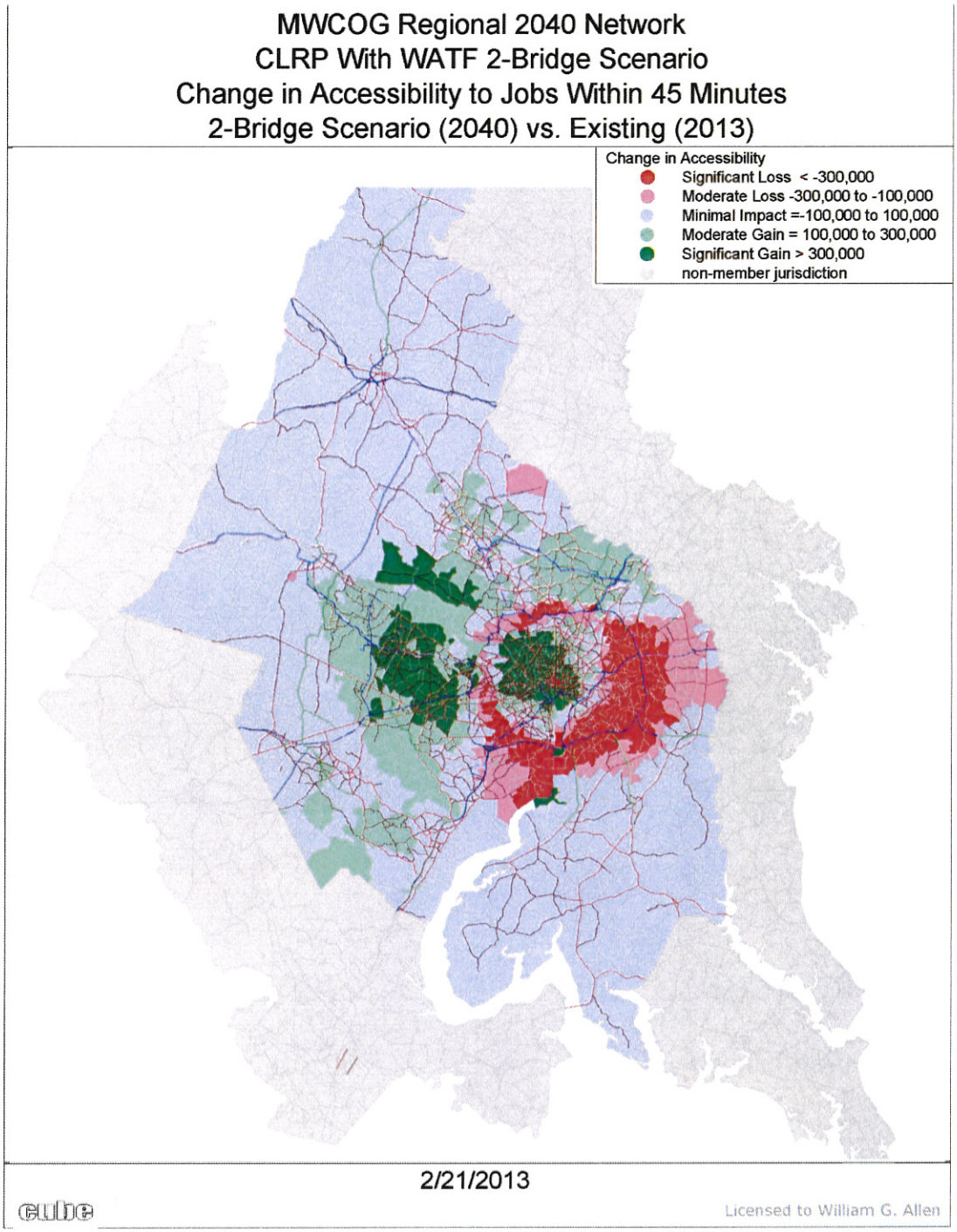


Note the:

- Expanded areas of "significant gain" (green areas) for the 2-bridge scenario, in the District of Columbia, Montgomery County, and Northern Virginia.
- Reduced areas of "moderate loss" (pink) around the northern and western areas of the Capital Beltway corridor.
- Increased areas of "moderate gain" (light green) in Montgomery and northern Prince George's Counties, as well as in Northern Virginia.
- Reduced areas of "significant loss" (red) around the northern portions of the Capital Beltway corridor in southern Maryland, and in the western and southern parts of Northern Virginia close to the Capital Beltway.

Policing

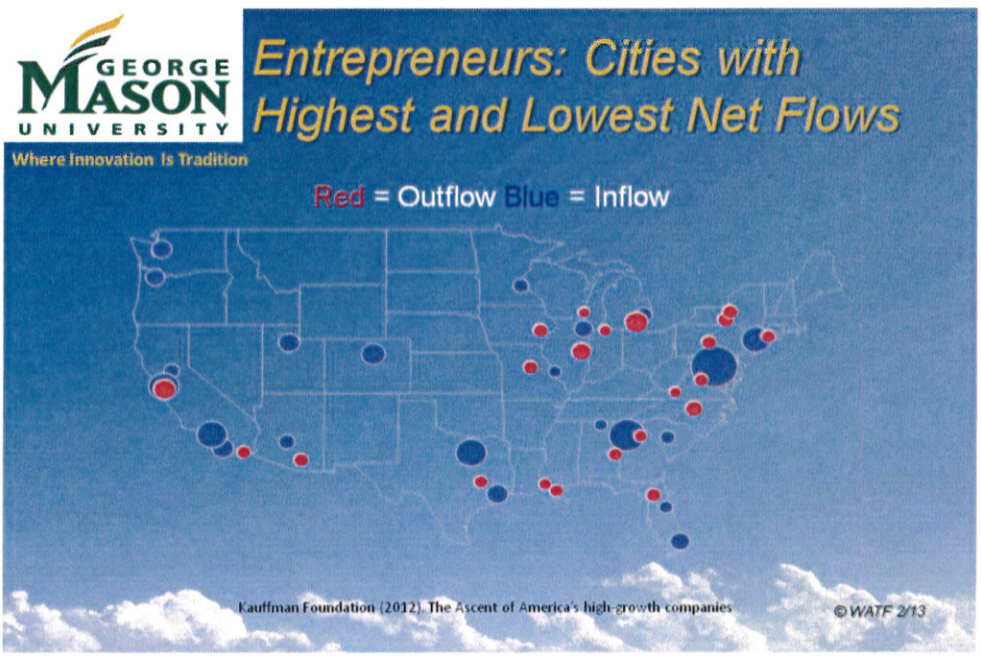
The RTPP should go further than its draft reference to clearing incidents and clearly state the problem.

The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that 20% of traffic congestion is caused by police activity. Improving policing methods to inhibit rubbernecking and lane closures could produce a near 20% reduction in congestion for minimal cost, but it may require research to learn how some other nations avoid the problem.

Innovation

Conventional transit constrains people to live by its schedules. TPB should be looking to the future and asking: "What is the evolution beyond the automobile and today's transit?" Promising concepts are under development that blend the virtues of transit and the automobile.

With the exception of BRT and digital technology to improve communication or manage traffic demand, the RTPP does not seem to look for innovation. This is surprising, as the Washington metro area attracts and retains more entrepreneurs than any other metro area in the United States.

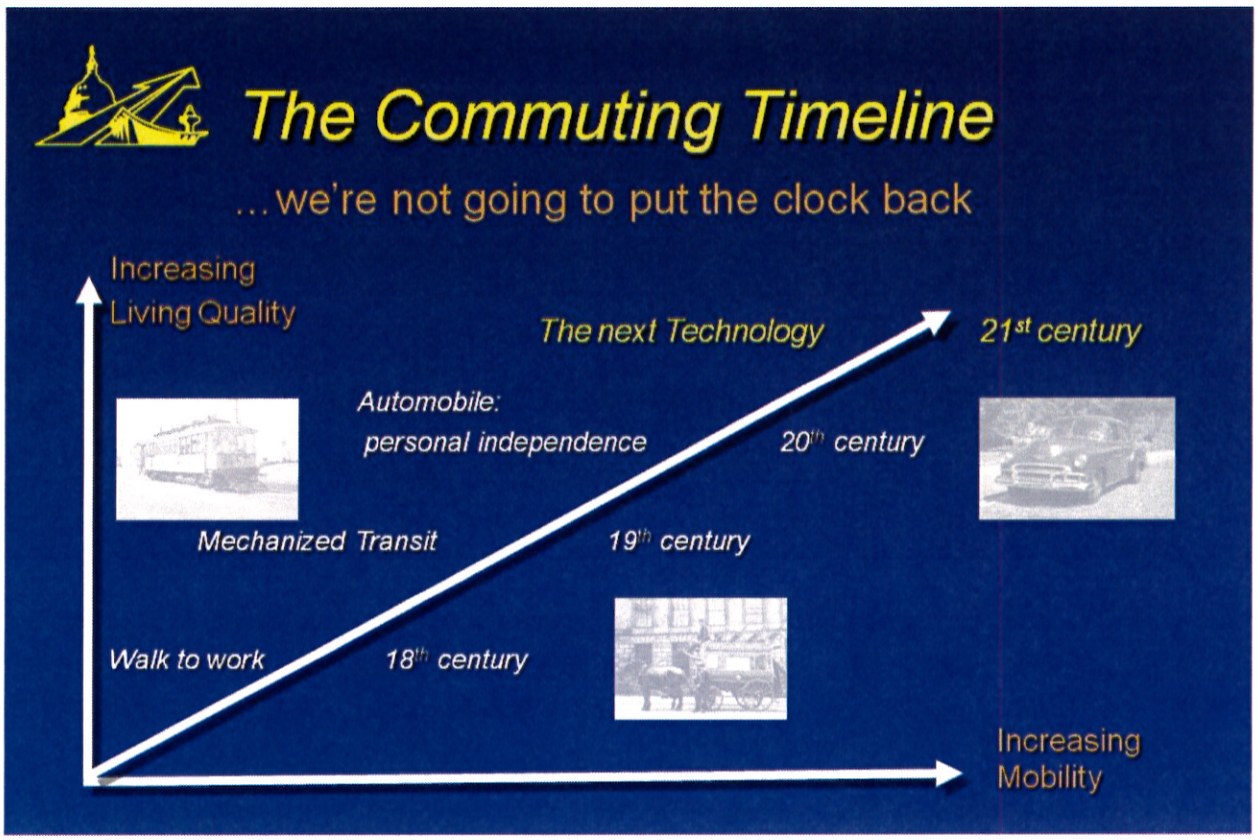


If the TPB calls for better bicycle systems and better bus transit, that is what the region likely will get. However, if TPB or the implementing agencies in its membership also issued a Request for Information on, for example, innovative solutions to expand the capacity of existing highway right-of-ways, or to expand the accessibility of rail transit stops beyond half a mile, TPB might be surprised at the stimulated thinking created[3].

[3] After World War I, the British Army sought better aircraft noise detectors, and the fledgling Royal Air Force issued an RFP for a better means of detecting aircraft. The Army gained better noise detectors. The RAF got RADAR!

Historically, the size of cities has been defined by the transportation mode available for people to get to work. In 1800, most people walked to work. In the mid-1800s, horse-drawn and then electrically powered transit was introduced, enabling cities to expand. Electric commuter trains came into operation toward the end of the 19th century, together with trolley cars[4], enabling further expansion. Post World War II, the automobile gave most people freedom from transit schedules and provided transportation flexibility, which significantly improved their quality of life and enabled America to become the best housed nation in history.

Today's transit in our area is simply an extrapolation of 19th century transit systems. The automobile is the only real mode innovation applied since the 19th century.



Energy Efficiency and Emissions

Approximately one-third of the region's greenhouse gas emissions comes from transportation.

The focus on electric cars in the RTPP is too narrow.

By 2040, we can expect to see:

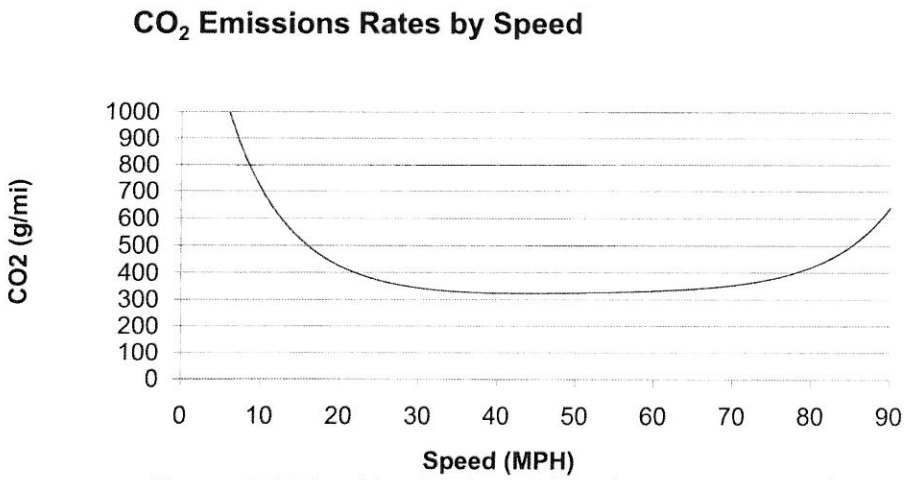
- More reliance on transit.
- A slightly higher percentage of the population living within mixed use developments that provide residences within walking and bicycling distance of shops, libraries, work and recreation.
- Increased use of rental or shared cars for occasional use.

[4] Washington's first wave of so called "urban sprawl" was caused by trolley cars, i.e. transit.

However, a majority of the region's population and most regular transit users will still need an automobile for many, and in most cases, all trips.

Introduction of electric cars can help reduce transportation emissions, but it is far from being the most effective strategy available to the region. The lowest hanging fruit – increased highway efficiency, free-flowing traffic on the regional road system – constitutes the largest mid- and near-term savings for the region in the use of transportation energy, and thus in the reduction of transportation emissions.

For example, increasing speed from 10 mph to 30 mph produces a nearly threefold reduction in CO_2 emissions and a similar increase in fuel efficiency.



(Source: UC Riverside – Southern California Data – courtesy of MWCOG.)

Renewable Fuel

By 2040, the work currently under way to provide aviation with sustainable drop-in bio-fuels can be expected to also provide surface transportation with carbon-neutral or near carbon-neutral renewable fuels at an affordable price.

Use of low carbon drop-in bio-jet fuel for commercial airline services began in June 2011, and the first services to the Washington region took place later that year.

The airlines, for whom fuel is 40% of their operating cost, are motivated by supply security, price stability, and by a desire to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions for environmental as well as tax reasons. The Department of Defense (DoD) also is working to use sustainable fuels in the future. The DoD is motivated by energy security, cost, and environmental consideration.

Strong coordination exists between the civil and military programs, which now are moving from development to application. The Boeing Company estimates that by the end of 2014, 1% of the airlines' fuel need will come from renewable sources.

A byproduct of the bio-jet fuel production process is "green diesel" – a true sustainable diesel fuel without the complications experienced by operators using "bio-diesel". Given large scale production of bio-jet fuel and green diesel, it is reasonable to suppose that green gasoline also will be produced in the future in large quantities and at affordable prices.

Consequently, in addition to electrically powered vehicles, the RTPP's energy efficiency/low emissions focus should be upon:
1) Congestion reduction improvements to the region's highway system.
2) Support and infrastructure for renewable low carbon fuels that do not compete with food production.

Incidentally, it is a mistake to believe that electrically powered highway vehicles and transit vehicles generate no emissions. They merely move the source of the emissions to the power station generating electricity, though given modern power generation, electrically powered transportation can produce significantly lower emissions per mile than traditional fossil-fueled vehicles.

Transportation v the Economy

Nobody travels for the sake of travel. They travel for the purpose at the other end of the journey. Collectively, these myriad journeys make up the economy. The less time spent in travel, the greater a company's productivity, and the higher the quality of life for the region's inhabitants.

Consequently, resolving the region's serious transportation deficiencies is of critical importance if the region is to sustain and expand its employment base, as well as sustaining its quality of life and expanding that quality of life more broadly throughout the region.

As the TPB's Performance Analysis did show, transit alone can provide but little improvement to support economic and quality of life objectives. Real improvement calls for a reduction in highway congestion.

Two examples:
1) Congestion reduces the productivity of a school bus and forces most of the region's school systems to use more buses than would be required with a less congested highway system. Using Fairfax County's school system as an example, the cost of operating a school bus is equivalent to the cost of a teacher. So more school buses means fewer teachers or higher school costs. Secondly, by lengthening school bus journeys, congestion causes more parents to drive their children to and from school, adding to congestion and wasting energy.
2) Every product or service we buy involves a truck. Congestion slows deliveries, increases the number of trucks required, as well as delivery costs, fuel burn and emissions. For example, to service its customers in the National Capital Region, Guernsey Office Products requires 15% to 20% more trucks, due to our congested road system, to make the same number of deliveries. Similarly, utility companies must employ more trucks and staff to service equipment and customers.

The economic, environmental and societal case for eliminating highway congestion in all but dense urban areas is compelling, as the cost of that congestion is higher than the cost of the cure for households, as well as businesses and governments. For example, the intersection of Virginia Route 28 and I-66 is costing the freight industry over 500,000 hours of delay a year. As trucks are only 3% of the traffic at that intersection, the total cost is more like 16 million hours of delay a year, which based on local hourly costs, is depriving the regional economy of approximately $400 million a year, and that is from only one intersection.

At the personal level, congestion wastes fuel. According to regional data published by the Texas Transportation Institute, the nation's leading authority on the subject, congestion is costing a typical family of four over $500 a year in wasted fuel.

The energy, fuel efficiency and economic sections of this comment drew upon the Fairfax County Chair's Private Sector Energy Task Force Report and Recommendations for their Board of Supervisors, published in September 2012.

Sincerely,

Leo Schefer

Leo Schefer

August 23, 2013

The Honorable Scott York, Chairman
Transportation Planning Board
c/o Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chairman York and members of the TPB:

We appreciate the work that has gone into the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) and your public outreach efforts. We commend the focus on Near Term and On-Going Strategies, which include a number of important priorities including first and foremost the maintenance of the existing system. We also strongly support and urge the TPB to adopt Scenario B, transit and TOD, as the long-term strategy for the region.

Near Term Strategies: We strongly support the following Near Term strategies:

1) Bicycle/Pedestrian Access to Metro
2) Commuting alternatives
3) Bike and pedestrian infrastructure in general

On-Going Strategies: We strongly support the following On-Going Strategies:

1) Metro Maintenance
2) Highway/Bridge Maintenance
3) Bus Priority
4) Accessible transportation

Later in this letter we will share specific recommendations for refinements to these and the other Near Term and On-Going strategies. But now we wish to turn to the Long-Term strategies.

Long Term Strategies:

We overwhelmingly support Scenario B for a transit and transit-oriented development future, which we believe best reflects the goals of the Region Forward Compact, COG's Climate Strategy, Activity Centers investment strategy, air quality and equity and affordable housing efforts.

- We are concerned that the RTPP does not mention the COG Climate Strategy or the significant threat we face from global warming. It is this threat which makes Scenario B so essential.

- We are also concerned that the RTPP seeks to downplay the role of Region Forward, adopted in 2010, as compared to the TPB Vision adopted back in 1998. The statement in the report that " Region Forward includes transportation components, largely focused on promoting alternative modes, which are a subset of goals from the TPB Vision," inappropriately downplays Region Forward treating it as a subset of the ancient TPB Vision, when in fact it provides a clear refocusing on a more sustainable approach to land use and transportation in the COG region. Scenario B is more in keeping with the sustainable vision of Region Forward.

- Finally, Scenario B should also specifically mention and incorporate the Metro Momentum plan as a critical priority investment, essential for many of the new transit routes to function effectively. In fact the RTPP should include significant discussion of Momentum.

In contrast to our strong support for Scenario B, we have serious concerns about Scenario A and the combined scenario.

- Express toll lanes have proven extremely costly to construct. Their expansive double ramp systems cause these projects to rise to the cost of some high-capacity transit investments.

- Express toll lanes do not appear to help support more efficient land use patterns and could fuel continued outward expansion because of the peak hour capacity expansion that they provide.

- Moreover, the implementation has fallen far short of the promises when it comes to investment in bus transit.

- It's also inaccurate to call the bus service on express toll lanes Bus Rapid Transit. It is in reality express bus service without the land-use influencing role that linear transit can provide in the arterial environment.

- The privatization of the toll lanes, along with non-compete clauses in some cases, means that future revenues cannot be invested in our Metrorail system or other nearby high-capacity transit.

Given these issues, we have been surprised that there has not been a more robust discussion among elected officials at COG about the relative merits of the large toll lane networks that have been proposed by some staff, as compared to priority investment in rail transit, other high capacity transit, and transit-oriented development. Yet, after years of COG scenarios that show transit, TOD and jobs/housing balance, offering better transportation performance ("What Would it Take Scenario" and land use/TOD component of "Aspirations Scenario") the tolling approach continues to be pressed by staff as the top priority approach.

If tolling is to be an option for the region, then there should first be an evaluation of tolling of all existing highway lanes combined with conversion of a lane in each corridor to express bus and use of the revenues for bus and rail transit. This option would not require the expensive dual ramp structures and the disruptive construction of new highway lanes, and has the potential to create a better operational synergy with the types of transit that shape more efficient land use. In fact, it is not clear that HOT lanes encourage transit use and it could be quite the opposite. HOT lanes are a peak hour capacity management approach. Rail transit offers both a peak hour alternative to road congestion AND

a land shaping function. If HOT lanes reduce peak hour congestion they may also do so while shifting trips from transit back to driving, while also consuming funds that could support rail transit investment and a network of TOD. Highways where all lanes are tolled might send a different signal in the market and encourage more rail and other high capacity transit use, creating a better combined operational performance and certainly better long term performance than HOT lanes with express bus.

Therefore, we hope that the TPB will not support Scenario A (HOT/Express Toll Lanes) or the proposed combination of Scenario A and B. We also note that that Scenario B can be combined with a number of the Near Term and Ongoing Strategies into a very effective transit and transportation demand management approach, something the report could have addressed in detail.

Comments on the Survey:

The survey of the general public could not effectively communicate the benefits of the composite/comprehensive approach mentioned above -- in terms of improving access to daily needs and improving the performance of the entire transportation system over the long-term. Because of the numerous categories in the survey it is not possible to tell the full degree of support for a composite transit, TOD, bike/ped, information and demand management approach as compared to the toll road approach.

Finally, we are troubled by the fact that the survey included this question: "Do you think opposition from current residents and businesses will be an obstacle to transit station development?," but didn't include a similar question about potential opposition to tolls, toll road construction, and private control of toll facilities.

Additional Specific Comments:

What follows are some additional specific comments on the Near-Term and On-going Strategies and some other components of the report, followed by our recommendation for how the Regional Transportation Priority Plan should be applied.

Near Term Strategies:

Bike/Pedestrian Access to Metro - We do not recommend overpasses or underpasses for arterial streets -- only where a highway presents an obstacle to reaching the station. The proposal should not be limited to bike paths but should include complete streets with bike lanes and cycle tracks, and also bike stations.

Alleviate bottlenecks -- We caution that these near-term fixes, which the plan lists as including building new lanes, have also become the default approach leading to incremental expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, not tens of millions of dollars as the report states. Because of induced traffic and continuation of suburban development patterns, these projects can perpetuate traffic problems, divide neighborhoods, and divert resources that should be spent on transit, complete streets and connected local street networks. It's not that you don't do many of them, but a deeper analysis is necessary regarding their long term effects on travel, the effect on neighborhoods, the option of local street networks in lieu of arterial expansion, the option of repurposing lanes for BRT. At some point there is a huge cost. One good example being Braddock Road within the first mile or two of the Beltway.

Commute Alternatives: Perhaps the name should be Commute Options since these are often PRIMARY modes for many people in the region. The policies should include transit benefits and parking cash out. The report also omits mention of one of the region's most successful TDM programs -- the range of programs being led by Arlington with an $8 million budget and well-documented results.

Pedestrian Infrastructure: Should include recommendation for street grids in new development. Virginia sought to adopt a Secondary Street Connection standard in 2007 until it was gutted in the current administration.

Bicycle Infrastructure: Should include separated cycle tracks and bike stations.

Parking Policy: This should be added as a near-term strategy. Parking pricing, removal of parking minimums, parking cash-out (employee benefit) can all send pricing signals and encourage reduction in SOV travel.

TOD: TOD should be added as a near-term investment strategy. Approval of TOD projects is accelerating and can be implemented much more quickly than large transit and highway projects.

On-going Strategies:

Metro Maintenance: Concur with this top priority but believe that Momentum has many components which should be part of an on-going strategy included in this report.

Highway/Bridge Maintenance: This should include frequently updated disclosure by the DOT's of bridge and road conditions, total estimate costs of repair/replacement, and the extent of the backlogs compared to annual spending.

Bus Priority: This should include REPURPOSING existing lanes and include arterial BRT.

Roadway Efficiency: Traffic light timing must take into consideration the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists and the goal of establishing a walkable, livable environment.

Accessible Transportation: This should include training to use primary transit systems where that can be a safe and feasible option.

Enforcement -- Policy reporting must begin noting roadway design conditions the might have made the particular location more dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists and contributed to an incident.

The Process Going Forward:

We have long recommended that the COG vision documents like Region Forward, the Climate Strategy, air quality and equity issues have significant influence on the drafting of the CLRP. We won an amendment to that effect in the CLRP solicitation document one year, but it has scarcely been applied. **To the extent that the RTPP is amended to reflect the equity and sustainability guidance of these COG policies, we are pleased that the RTPP will then be used to set priorities in the next CLRP update. But this must allow for a complete reevaluation of the CLRP including the deletion of legacy projects which do not meet the goals and strategies of the RTPP. Will this happen?**

We also recommend that many local street network projects and bicycle/pedestrian investments that support TOD and walkable, mixed-use communities be acknowledged as regional transportation solutions. We recommend that packages of TOD related street, bike/ped and even TDM be created to demonstrate the magnitude of these investments and their interrelated purpose of supporting Scenario B. We also urge TDM to receive a much more robust investment from the states and localities in the COG region.

In terms of public process, we have long called for an integrated process that is easy for the public to understand and participate in -- one in which the local, regional, and state transportation planning processes and public meetings are clearly tied into the COG CLRP process. We recommend development and adoption of this process in time to be used in the 2014 CLRP update.

Finally, as part of Scenario B, this region needs to craft a regional Next Generation of Transit plan and this should be done jointly by WMATA and COG. WMATA is federally chartered to develop regional transit plans and should play a key role in development of this plan with COG -- ideally prior to the next CLRP update.

Conclusion:

This RTPP has to be more than a rearranging of the deck chairs. We face a never before seen challenge in climate change and must make fundamental changes in land use and transportation in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. We must also due so to reduce our energy dependency and enhance our national security. In turn, we must do so to use our tax dollars wisely and to reduce transportation costs for households -- freeing up resources to spend on more productive economic and knowledge-based activity. The RTPP represents progress, but only if Scenario B becomes the priority approach for our region, in order to meet the significant global challenge we face.

Thank you,

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director

The TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

One Region Moving Forward

August 23, 2013

Summary of the CAC Response to the Draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

This document, drafted by members of the CAC, provides a summary of key themes revealed during the CAC's discussion of the RTPP draft. These comments were gathered through a series of meetings and written exchanges among the members.

The CAC held a special meeting Thursday August 15, specifically to focus on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. In addition, The CAC provided initial reactions during the July CAC meeting, when the draft was first revealed, and members also participated in the TPB - RTPP workshop in July.

The discussion has been focused on:

1) Review of content in the draft RTPP
2) Elements that appear to be incomplete or missing from the draft RTPP
3) Issues surrounding implementation

Many of the key points raised tend to fall into broad themes, as described in the sections below.

Goals, Challenges, and Strategies

Goals: The CAC generally endorses the broad regional goals presented in the report. The CAC has been a strong advocate of multi-modal planning, including efficient connectivity within and between modes, and believes that regional planning is most effective by linking long-range transportation and land use planning.

Challenges: We can certainly appreciate that there are challenges and obstacles to achieving regional goals, and the report highlights some key issues. Greater emphasis should be placed on funding as a major challenge, and report lacks any broad quantification of what levels of funding would be required to achieve the goals.

Strategies: The RTPP draft lists 15 strategies that can best be used to achieve regional goals. However, the report is missing a clear sense of what process was used to nominate and select the specific strategies put forward. Why these and not others? What analytical process was used to identify and select these as best able to meet regional goals? A recommendation is that an appendix be included

that rigorously describes the evidence for inclusion, and potential costs and benefits arising from implementing each strategy.

RTPP Recommendations in Establishing the Highest Priorities

The consensus of the CAC is that recommendations on priorities for the most effective strategies need to be further focused and refined. There is a risk that if all strategies are advanced as being important, then we are left with no real priorities. The RTPP should avoid the temptation to have something for everyone.

While the recommendations are summarized to three major groupings, each contains several strategies that in essence capture nearly all strategies considered.

- The *first recommendation* on maintenance of metro and roadways seems clear in its intent, but lacks specifics on the steps toward implementation (see below).
- The *second recommendation* on transit crowding and roadway congestion captures all strategies that broadly touch supply and demand.
    - This includes a variety of elements on supply ranging from Metro capacity expansion to toll road construction. We agree that Metro core expansion is essential; however, we don't yet believe that consensus has been reached with regard to an extensive toll lane network.
    - Many other strategies are mentioned on the demand side. The CAC is a very strong advocate of creating effective links between land use and transportation through activity centers and believes this should be called out in its importance.
- The *third recommendation* continues to be a catch-all. The report should expand the discussion and take a more firm stand on items are truly worthy of being high priorities to meet regional goals.
    - A Complete Streets policy should be given explicit mention as an effective means to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and should be given emphasis in the third grouping. Other integrated bicycle and pedestrian improvements are high-return, cost-effective solutions.
- Key recommendations surround the maintenance and expansion of Metro. These same points are key elements of WMATA's Momentum plan. The RTPP makes no mention of Momentum and it should. WMATA needs to be a key partner in the priorities plan, and providing explicit support to their long-term strategies for maintenance, expansion and funding is essential.

While we agree that public input provided through the surveys provided some valuable insights, the survey results should not be the only major driver for setting priorities. Expert opinion from planners and subject matter experts need to also drive the recommendations.

Planning Process for Implementation

This is perhaps the greatest missing element in the plan. At minimum, there needs to be a report section -- ideally a Chapter 6 -- that has a fulsome discussion on how the RTPP will drive the planning process. The short paragraph on page 84, describing "Next Steps", is not sufficient.

Elements should include:

- The specific interactions including the timing and content of such interactions, between the TPB, COG transportation staff, transportation planning organizations of each jurisdiction, and WMATA.
- How does to RTPP influence the initial formulation of projects, and identify those projects that best serve the RTPP? The RTPP should set the agenda for the planning process, not be a measuring stick after projects are already formulated and funded.
- CRLP process: While the draft makes mention that it can influence the CRLP, there is a risk that is already too late in the process. Items close to inclusion in the CRLP have already been subject to extensive engineering and targeted for funding. Instead, the RTPP needs to work further upstream to influence projects first being conceived, to include those that best fulfill regional goals. In essence, the CLRP becomes subordinate to the RTPP, and the RTPP is a framework into which the CLRP would have to conform.
- Funding: The realistic elements of funding need to be discussed in an implementation chapter. The discussion can be expanded to include ways that federal and other funds can be targeted toward initiatives that are truly regional in nature. To be most effective, the TPB can take a stronger role in directing how such funds are best spent to meet broad regional goals.

Developing broad changes to the planning process to accommodate the RTPP may be more that can be agreed over the next few weeks. Further phases of the RTPP dealing specifically with implementation steps should be considered. To be effective, this will require considerable dialogue among all regional planning entities.

Measurement

CAC members are concerned that the RTPP does not provide enough emphasis on the economic analysis, compliance monitoring, and other forms of measurement. There was relatively minor discussion on what analytical process was used to determine the list of 15 strategies. Clearly, measurement needs to be an important part of an ongoing planning process. Specific concerns regarding measurement and setting priorities include:

- How will the effectiveness of the RTPP be measured? "You cannot manage what you cannot measure." What criteria will be used to monitor success or failure?
- What is the process to hold jurisdictions accountable for making sure their projects are conceived and judged against the RTPP?

- Cost – benefit and other economic analysis needs to take a broader role in setting priorities. While it is easier to conduct such analysis on individual projects, how do we know if the broad strategies being put forward are most cost effective relative to their benefits? The CAC believes that such cost-benefit analysis needs to be essential in the implementation phase.

Measurement should be given considerable mention is the suggested implementation section.

Regionalism

A greater emphasis in the document should be placed on integrated regional planning that transcends jurisdictional boundaries. The plan should give greater priority to the strategies and ultimately the resulting projects that best meet regional goals – not those narrowly focused on one jurisdiction.

Combining various jurisdictional plans does not constitute a regional plan. The planning process needs to be responsive to regional infrastructure needs given future demographics, independent of jurisdictional boundaries and political bias. That becomes the baseline against which progress can be measured.

In summary, we would ask staff to carefully consider each of the comments above. These were gathered with much thought from experienced and passionate transportation advocates who have been active in CAC meetings this year, and some members for many years.

Other specific comments have been put forward individually by members of the CAC as part of the public comment period.