

REPORT
TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
May 15, 2013
Stephen Still, 2013 CAC Chair

The CAC's meeting on May 9 included a briefing and discussion about the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, discussion of a letter that was submitted by the CAC to WMATA on WMATA's Momentum Strategy, and a briefing and discussion on a potential Regional Green Streets Policy. The meeting also included an update on the TPB "Transportation Planning Information HUB" website.

Briefing and Discussion on the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

Mr. Kirby briefed the committee on the development of the RTPP. He explained that a "priorities plan" was, in part, originally an idea of the CAC. He said that in 2010, the TPB, at the urging of the CAC, hosted an event called "The Conversation on Setting Regional Transportation Priorities," which convened key stakeholders, including members of the TPB, CAC, Technical Committee and Access for All Advisory Committee. Following that event, the TPB voted to develop a Priorities Plan. The scope for the RTPP was approved by the Priorities Plan Scoping Task Force and the TPB in July of 2011.

Mr. Kirby said that planning for the RTPP initially focused on the use of performance measures to guide the selection of priorities, but following a series of stakeholder sessions early in 2012, staff determined that such an approach did not resonate with the public. In June of 2012, staff convened a large focus group with more than 40 paid participants, which was facilitated by the public engagement organization AmericaSpeaks. At this session, participants were presented with a draft "strawman" document containing regional goals (derived from the 1998 TPB Vision), unmet challenges, and strategies to address those challenges. Based upon feedback from that session, staff revised the strawman. In July 2012 staff presented the TPB with an Interim Report on the RTPP.

This past fall, Mr. Kirby said that staff has been developing an online survey on regional transportation priorities. A firm specializing in web-based public participation, MetroQuest, has been engaged to develop the survey, which is intended to be visually engaging and educational. He said this survey, which is currently underway, will be taken by a controlled sample of 600+ residents who have been randomly selected to reflect the entire TPB region. Participants who complete the survey will receive a \$25 gift card. Staff expects to complete this survey by the end of June.

Mr. Kirby's presentation included a draft proposed list of the RTPP content, including goals, challenges and strategies (near-term, ongoing and long-term). He also showed the CAC some examples (screen captured images) from the survey.

Mr. Kirby said that staff will present information on the RTPP at every TPB meeting over the coming months:

- May: Staff will present a status report.
- June: Staff will present a detailed outline of the final RTPP.
- July: The RTPP draft will be released. This draft document will incorporate public opinion findings from the MetroQuest online survey. The release of this draft document will initiate a public comment period, which will occur over the remainder of the summer. A work session on the RTPP, chaired by former TPB Chair Todd Turner, will be conducted prior to the July TPB meeting.
- September: The TPB will be asked to approve the RTPP.

CAC member questions and comments included the following:

- ***How will the final priorities for the RTPP be selected?*** CAC members asked Mr. Kirby to clarify how the priorities for the draft will be/have been selected. To what degree will they be based upon public opinion research that is currently underway through the online survey? Will the draft list of priorities largely be based upon staff recommendations?

Mr. Kirby answered that the online survey will inform the final results that will be presented in July, but these survey data will be just one input. He said that the July draft will be developed by staff as a revised “strawman” draft with inputs from a variety of sources. He said there will be plenty of opportunity for input because it is hard to imagine that the staff-developed draft will be accepted completely by the TPB. He said the July work session will be a chance for important discussion about the draft, but this discussion will continue throughout the summer until the RTPP is approved by the TPB, which is currently scheduled for September.

- ***When the TPB adopts the RTPP, what will that mean?*** Mr. Kirby answered that the plan is intended to influence decision-making at the local and state levels. He said that the mantra of this planning activity is “think regionally, act locally.”
- ***What form will the final plan document take?*** Mr. Kirby said the final document will follow the PowerPoint presentation that he provided. It will include goals, challenges and strategies. It will include background and context. It will incorporate public input from the opinion research conducted through the online survey. He emphasized, however, that the nature and direction of this public input is not yet known.
- ***How can the CAC offer feedback?***
 - ***Is there a deadline or specific point at which comprehensive CAC feedback would be sought?*** Mr. Kirby said the RTPP would be discussed at every TPB and CAC meeting through September. He said, however, that it would make most sense for the committee to submit comments after the draft plan had been released in July.

- ***Can the CAC take the online survey?*** Mr. Kirby said the survey could be open to CAC members but only after the controlled survey of 600 had been completed, which is expected by the end of June.
 - ***Town halls meetings?*** A member suggested that, at least in Virginia, town hall meetings should be hosted on the draft RTPP. Such sessions should include at least one elected official from the TPB.
- ***Members had specific comments about content of the plan:***
 - ***Division of strategies into near-term, ongoing and long-term.*** A member questioned the categorization of the draft strategies. For example, he said that some long-term strategies (e.g., transit-oriented development or toll lanes) might be considered ongoing because they are already underway. Mr. Kirby answered that long-term strategies represented long-range scenarios of regional systems that TPB staff had analyzed through travel demand modeling.
 - ***Electric vehicles.*** A member warned that promoting electric vehicles (one of the proposed near-term strategies) would not reduce driving. He further questioned the environmental benefits of bio-fuels.
- ***Members had specific comments about the survey:***
 - ***Will the survey sample be representative of the region?*** Mr. Kirby explained that the sampling methodology had been carefully designed to be representative of the region. He explained that the survey's goal is to get at least one response from each of 600 postal carriers routes that staff had selected to be geographically representative of the region. Successive waves of mailings are being sent to individuals who have been randomly selected from these 600 carrier routes.
 - ***How were the strategy impacts, which are presented in the survey, derived?*** A member asked whether the arrows showing the impacts of long-term scenarios were based upon qualitative or quantitative analysis. Mr. Kirby said these results were derived from modeling, but for this survey, the results were presented in a more qualitative fashion to provide a general sense of the scale of impact.
 - ***More detailed comments/questions:***
 - ***Private sector funding for toll projects.*** A member asked if the survey makes it clear that private capital may be available for toll projects. Mr. Kirby said that users were largely concerned with functionality and for the survey such financing issues were not so important, although they might be relevant to the actual RTPP document.
 - ***Car sharing.*** A member noted that car-sharing was not included in the draft.
 - ***Word choices.*** A member said that he would like to see the word "Transportation" included in the title "Regional Goals." He also said that the under Goal 2, "economic development" should be emphasized, not "activity centers."

Discussion of CAC Comments on WMATA's Momentum Strategy

At the April 11 CAC meeting, Mr. Shyam Kannan of WMATA presented an overview of Momentum, WMATA's Strategic Plan, and invited the CAC to provide feedback. In response to this solicitation, the CAC drafted a letter detailing the committee's collective comments on Momentum. The letter contains contributions from many CAC members, and went through several revisions between April 11 and May 9. At the May 9 CAC meeting, the committee discussed final revisions to the letter. The conversation included the following elements: establishing an equitable fare collection system on buses – specifically simplifying the process for adding money to a SmartTrip card; creating a friendlier stroller policy on buses; ensuring that investment in bicycle access does not occur to the detriment of other transportation investment; increasing non-driving access to metro stations; and ensuring regional coordination and connectivity.

A copy of the final letter, which was submitted to WMATA, is attached to this report. It includes comments and suggestions about funding, connectivity, core Metrorail capacity, development, and the use of advanced technology.

Briefing and Discussion on a Potential Regional Green Streets Policy

Mr. Kirby provided an overview and briefing on the TPB's efforts on establishing a potential Green Streets Policy. He defined Green Streets as the use of landscaping, trees, and other design elements to capture and filter storm water runoff from streets. He also mentioned the Regional Green Streets Workshop, which was held on April 8 in conjunction with the COG Department of Environmental Programs, and discussed the workshop's findings and next steps.

CAC members were interested in this idea, and had several comments. Some themes that emerged from the conversation included: the kind of opposition Green Streets might face, the role of new technology in establishing Green Streets both now and in the future, and a focus on the need for Green Streets in areas of jurisdictional transition. One CAC member was particularly interested in the boundary between the District and Prince George's County. CAC members were also curious about the anticipated next steps of this initiative, and if a regional policy – such as the Regional Complete Streets Policy – would be established. In response to this latter question, Mr. Kirby replied that the concepts behind Green Streets are far more complex than the concepts behind Complete Streets. He said that at this point, the next steps include compiling a series of best practices, and developing options for regional approaches.

Other Issues

- Ms. Bilek, of TPB staff, provided an update on Public Involvement Activities. She mentioned that the Spring CLI, which was held on April 25, 30, and May 4, was

extremely successful, and that the program graduates would be recognized at the upcoming TPB meeting on May 15.

- Mr. Swanson provided a briefing on the status of the “Transportation Planning Information HUB” website, and invited members of the CAC to provide feedback.
- Mr. Kirby of TPB staff provided a briefing on the upcoming TPB agenda.

ATTENDEES
CAC Meeting, May 9, 2013

Members Present

1. Steve Still, Chair, (VA)
2. Neha Bhatt (DC)
3. Veronica Davis (DC)
4. Cherian Eapen (MD)
5. John Epps (MD)
6. Patrick Gough (DC)
7. Allen Muchnick (VA)
8. Jeff Parnes (VA)
9. David Skiles (VA)
10. Tina Slater (MD)
11. Emmet Tydings (MD)

Alternates Present

- Andrea Hamre (VA)
Rosemarie Helen Savio (DC)
Jeff Slavin (MD)
Jarrett Stoltzfus (MD)

Members Not Present

- Justin Clarke (MD)
Tracy Hadden Loh (DC)
Emily Oaksford (DC)
Lorena Rios (VA)

Staff and Guests

- Ron Kirby, COG/TPB staff
John Swanson, COG/TPB staff
Deb Kerson Bilek, COG/TPB staff
Christine Green, Safe Routes to
School National Partnership
Bill Orleans, citizen

The TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

One Region Moving Forward

May 10, 2013

Comments by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) on WMATA's Strategic Plan: Momentum

On April 11, 2013, Mr. Shyam Kannan, Managing Director at WMATA's Office of Planning, presented an overview of WMATA's Strategic Plan to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The CAC is comprised of five representatives, plus alternates, from each of three jurisdictions: DC, MD, and VA. The role of the CAC is to provide citizen direction and feedback to the Washington region's Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in setting regional transportation policy and priorities.

In that briefing, Mr. Kannan provided an overview of the plan including these items, among others:

- Overview of the vision, mission, goals and strategies of the plan: Key elements relate to safety, customer service, regional mobility, and financial stability
- Confirmation of the value that Metro brings to the region: Allow 18% of the region's commuting trips to be made by transit – and over 43% in the system's core. Without Metro, congestion would increase 25% and thousands of lane miles of new roads would be required
- Funding requirements required to meet goals: Funding requirements to implement that plan are significant and by no means assured. \$1 billion per year is required just to maintain the existing system. Another \$500m per annum is required to expand the core, and another \$740m per annum is required to deliver the system required by 2040.

During the meeting other information was conveyed including a video that featured the General Manager, citizens, and other WMATA staff.

The presentation was very professionally delivered and well received.

Overview of Comments by the CAC

In general, the CAC endorses the overall tenets of the plan and believes it captures many of the important elements that provide direction for WMATA's future. Clearly, it is critical for WMATA's actions to be guided by a strategic planning process. We agree that obtaining required funding is essential for meeting ongoing maintenance, and well as meeting future systems visions. We encourage WMATA to continue public outreach in as many forums as possible to gain buy-in for Momentum.

The CAC offers the following comments and suggestions:

- **Funding:** The CAC agrees that any realistic plan needs to identify funding requirements. It is essential to explain the specific actions that will be delivered with each increment of spending so that a clear connection can be made between benefit and cost.
- **Connectivity:** Metro does not stand alone. To be an effective regional mobility tool, the system must be connected throughout the region, not only within the Metro system, but across all modes including pedestrian, bicycle, bus, commuter rail, automobile, and others. Significant coordination is required with other regional planning entities to effectively integrate Metro with all systems.
- **Core Metrorail Capacity:** Deficiencies in the core have already reached a critical stage, and will only get worse. Bold action is required including maximizing train capacity, re-designing stations, and implementing broader steps for infrastructure expansion.
- **Development:** As pointed out in the Momentum materials, land around Metrorail stations generates \$3.1 billion annually in property tax revenue to local jurisdictions. In addition to modernizing the physical infrastructure of Metro, WMATA should adopt a refined set of policies concerning station development to capture more of this value to support the transit system that created it. This could be in-house or through public-private partnerships.
- **Use of Advanced Technology:** Ease of fare collection, timing of next bus, and other customer conveniences can be enhanced through new technology. WMATA should continue to invest in leading solutions seeking to meet or exceed best practice in the US and around the globe.

We ask the Metro Board to move boldly forward. Steps outlined in Momentum are good first steps, but forceful action is required. To reiterate your own words, "Make no small plans...Metro requires a grand vision and robust investment. Half measures will not do."

Additional Comments on Specific Topics

Members of the CAC, either individually or collectively, have made these comments about specific elements of Momentum that should be refined, or elements be given greater consideration:

- **Core Capacity:** There is a critical need to promptly address deficiencies in Metrorail core capacity, especially to run all eight-car trains during peak periods and to build the interline connections near Rosslyn and the Pentagon to alleviate bottlenecks at Metrorail's two Potomac crossings. Moreover, the reduction in Blue Line service between the Pentagon and Rosslyn to accommodate the new Silver Line exacerbates our "Region Divided" east-west inequities.
- **Bus Service Planning:** WMATA should take a fresh look at the planning paradigm for bus service. The current model is to move people from residential neighborhoods to jobs in the commercial areas of DC. However the home-based-work trip is only one of many trips that people make in a given day. People rely on bus service to get to school, places of worship, the grocery store, the

doctor, to visit friends and family, often to places not served by Metro Rail. WMATA should give greater emphasis to designing routes as a means to connect neighborhoods across the city/region and not just to the commercial areas.

WMATA should consider converting more high volume routes into a fixed interval schedule (i.e. every 10 minutes), similar to the Circulator. In addition, consider converting some of those routes into limited stop/express routes.

- *Family-Friendly Transit:* As the trend toward carless/car-lite households continues around the region, there is a need for WMATA to look to be more convenient for families. WMATA current stroller policy on buses can be cumbersome for parents traveling with small children. Parents have to negotiate holding a baby, folding a stroller, getting on the bus, and tapping their fare card. Transit agencies around the world are becoming more family-friendly. WMATA should look at best practices around the globe to implement family-friendly policies. In Copenhagen, for example, parents are allowed to keep their child in a stroller on the bus. Each bus has two areas for strollers to ensure the safety of the child.
- *Bike Modal Access Share:* WMATA's goals for encouraging bicycle modal access are a good start, but to achieve leadership and effectively prioritize bicycling, WMATA should consider pushing for even higher rates of bicycle modal access. The WMATA Board of Directors has adopted a goal to increase bike access share from current system-wide levels of 0.7% to 2.1% in 2020 and 3.5% in 2030. In support of this goal, it plans to roughly double the amount of bike parking in the system from about 6,000-7,000 spaces currently to about 16,000 spaces by 2020. However, given population growth projections, this level of investment will just keep up with growth, and not effectively accommodate increased in bike modal access shares. WMATA should seek to systematically invest in bicycle parking that will not only keep up with population growth, but enable significant increases in bicycle modal access shares at its stations. Coordinated bike sharing through Capital Bikeshare is another effective strategy.

According to the Transportation Research Board, on a per transit passenger basis, bike-and-ride costs about 1/10 the amount of drive-and-ride. Bike parking is also more compact than car parking, making it easier to utilize land surrounding stations for economic development. About 12% of current Metrorail drive-and-ride passengers drive less than a mile from their home to a station, and another 32% drive 1-3 miles, while 67% of surveyed drive-and-ride passengers have indicated a willingness to bike to stations if improvements are made. Thus, there is significant potential for encouraging a shift toward biking to stations. For equity, for the environment, for the Next Generation of Metro, WMATA should consider a more ambitious goal for bike modal access share.

- *Other Forms of Station Access:* Metro needs to be cognizant of all effective means of providing station access across modes with a careful design tailored to each station's unique characteristics, whether urban or suburban.

Thinking should also be expanded to include quasi-transit service models to collect passengers and bring them to Metro stations. Flexible schedule-fixed route 'jitney' service, operated either publicly or in private partnership, could be a low-cost, easy-to-implement option for expanding a station's passenger catchment area and then take steps to achieve it.

- *Regional Coordination:* Momentum states that "Metro should be responsible for coordinating regional connectivity, fulfilling its role as the transit planner of the region." There should be tighter coordination with other regional planning entities. As an example, WMATA could coordinate closely with Montgomery County, who is currently evaluating a countywide BRT network. Since WMATA Priority Corridor Networks coincide closely with the County's proposed BRT corridors, having the regional transit authority at the table would 1) argue for/encourage more roadway priority for buses 2) encourage more suburban to suburban connections, which is currently underserved by public transit and 3) guide corridors to better connect to adjoining jurisdictions' transit systems throughout DC, MD, VA.
- *Fare Collection:* As WMATA moves toward modernizing its fare collection system, it should ensure that unbanked and/or low-income riders will not be negatively impacted by the new payment system. Many unbanked and low-income customers are transit dependent, but they would not have access to the fare mediums required under credit or smart phone-based fare collection models. WMATA should procure a system that enables all members of the community equal access to public transit services."
- *Station Site Planning:* The site planning and design for WMATA station upgrades (specifically transfer stations with bus shelters, park-and-ride, and kiss-and-ride facilities) should include a thoughtful approach to user circulation and the existing neighborhood context. Mode share and ridership may also increase by providing sensical circulation patterns from existing street networks, through the station grounds, and into the station itself. Prioritization of the pedestrian should be accounted for to limit conflicts and allow for prioritized access into the station. In addition, bicycle approach lanes and parking should be integrated into the design of the station, to allow for easy flow from the road into the station, bike parking area, and finally, to the Metro entrance. Well-marked crosswalks, bike lanes, and drive routes should clearly guide users to their desired entryway, parking area, or drop-off route. Overall hardscaping and landscaping for plaza and bus shelter areas should also be considered as an opportunity to increase the function of the station. Shelter from sun, wind, and rain; proper safety and path lighting; and innovative storm water management for the site will contribute to a better functioning and more appealing station.

- *Marketing and Advertising:* WMATA should make marketing a high priority, in the form of ads, videos, bus wraps, and others. Among important messages are: 1) teens and students can rely on transit, freeing up parents from chauffeuring and reducing the number of “new” drivers on the road 2) transit can help reduce the total cost of housing and transportation for residents (e.g., with better transit, two-earner households may be able to forego the second car)

The CAC appreciates WMATA’s consideration of our comments, and we look forward to being engaged as further phases of Momentum are developed, and specific actions are designed and implemented.

Action is critical to our region’s mobility and vitality.