

Emergency Preparedness Improvements Underway

The Transportation Planning Board has approved plans to strengthen regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents.

At the TPB meeting on May 19, the TPB approved a resolution endorsing a process for making such improvements. The recommended improvements were developed in April in response to a request by the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC). The TPB resolution directed the MOITS Task Forces and working groups to develop a schedule to ensure the expeditious implementation of the improvements over the next six months.

David Snyder, Falls Church City Council member, provided a briefing to the TPB on emergency preparedness activities. As chair of the Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Forces, Mr. Snyder has been a leader on transportation components of the region's emergency preparedness efforts.

All the major transportation agencies have assigned high-level staff to this task. Technical improvements will include automated sharing of information on roadway conditions and traffic incidents. Operational improvements will ensure

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Opponents and Supporters Agree to a Study of I-66

Opponents and supporters are voicing support for a study of a potential widening of I-66 inside the Beltway.

In a unanimous vote, the Transportation Planning Board at its May 19 meeting approved a feasibility study for "improving mobility" westbound in the I-66 corridor from Rosslyn to the Dulles Airport Access Road. The TPB amended the fiscal 2004-09 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the study, which gives it a green light to proceed.

The TIP amendment was requested by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), which will conduct the study in conjunction with

the Federal Highway Administration. Officials hope it will be completed in eight months.

A total of \$1.24 million has been allocated for the project, with an initial earmark of \$724,000. U.S. Representatives Frank Wolf and Tom Davis, both from Northern Virginia, secured federal funding for the analysis.

A more extensive study of I-66 widening had been funded in 2000, but was dropped in 2003 because of transportation funding shortfalls throughout Virginia. That study would have looked at widening the road in both



The I-66 study will look at westbound lanes between Rosslyn, pictured above, and the Beltway.

*See **I-66** on page 2*

directions and was more complex in terms of scope and controversy.

Virginia Governor Mark Warner agreed to the new I-66 analysis with the condition that it be limited to existing rights-of-way, and that it consider all realistic options, including widening, a “no build” option, one or more transit options, and one or more HOV/HOT lane options.

In a letter to Congressmen Wolf and Davis from September 2003, Governor Warner noted that the new study would be limited in scope and, in particular, would consider only westbound traffic. Still, he said, the proposal has generated controversy. “Arlington County opposes it, while Fairfax County has supported the widening of this segment of I-66,” wrote the governor.

“Different way of doing business”

“This controversy provides an opportunity to try a different way of doing business in Northern Virginia,” continued Governor Warner. This new approach will use “context-sensitive” approaches to community planning that will involve citizens and businesses from Arlington and Fairfax, as well as other interests from across the region.

At the TPB meeting on May 19, Chairman Chris Zimmerman emphasized that all the speakers during the public comment period—including those in favor of the widening and those opposed—had spoken in favor of the need for the study.

“This speaks well to the governor’s work in making it fair and balanced,” said Chairman Zimmerman who is a member of the Arlington County Board.

Tom Farley, District Administrator for VDOT, spoke enthusiastically about the new study and said VDOT staff looked forward to

meeting with different community groups.

In his comments, however, Mr. Farley indicated that compromise between opposing positions could be difficult to achieve no matter how open the study process is.

“I did notice that all speakers have a specific concept that they would like to promote,” said Farley.

Differing positions

During periods of heaviest commuter traffic, I-66 is reserved exclusively for carpools — eastbound in the morning and westbound after work. This means that both eastbound lanes are restricted to carpools with two or more people (HOV-2) between 6:30 and 9:00 a.m.; both westbound lanes are HOV-2 between 4:00 and 6:30 p.m. Prior to 1996, the carpool restriction for I-66 was three persons or more. The road was opened in 1982.

Opponents of widening advocate restoring the carpool restriction to HOV-3—three persons or more, which was the requirement for I-66 prior to 1996. They also said carpool hours should be expanded and HOV enforcement should be increased. In addition, they called for greater specificity in the analysis that will be done for the I-66 study. Nevertheless, opponents of widening who spoke during the TPB’s public comment period on May 19 generally expressed support for the study.

“This study, if scoped and conducted properly, can represent a positive step toward developing a sorely needed, cost-effective, long-term transportation management plan in the I-66 corridor,” said John Bennett of the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation.

Supporters of widening I-66 expressed disappointment that the study will not look at eastbound lanes. But they agreed the study will be a positive step. “This congestion unfortunately creates consistent delays, generates cut-through traffic to adjacent residential neighborhoods, adds to the our region’s accident rate and air pollution, and wastes costly fuel,” said Bob Grow of the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see Item 8 in the past meeting documents from the TPB’s May 19 meeting. ■

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that duties are assigned within each transportation management center and that communication is rapid among operations staff. Major agencies will designate operations staff exclusively to monitor roadway and transit systems and be ready to initiate and shepherd regional communications and coordination during an incident.

These improvements will require additional money. The pending reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs is expected to provide new funding and authority for regional incident management improvements.

For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see Item 9 in the past meeting documents from the May 19 meeting. ■

Regional Scenario Study Moving Forward

The TPB's "what if" study of land use and transportation scenarios is expected to provide preliminary results this July, according to a briefing by Bob Griffiths of the COG/TPB staff at the May 19 board meeting.

The Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study is looking at the long-term effects of alternative scenarios for 2030. Five land use scenarios have been developed:

- Higher household growth in the region
- More household growth in inner areas and clusters
- More job growth in outer areas
- The "Region Undivided" (more job and household growth on the eastern side of the region.)
- Transit-oriented development

TPB staff is currently analyzing these land use scenarios in combination with 1) the transportation system laid out in the most recently approved Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), and 2) the CLRP plus a set of demand management, transit and traffic operations enhancements—dubbed "CLRP+."

The results from this analysis will be presented to the TPB in July. Later this year, a set of additional transportation scenarios will be developed, including new highway and transit facilities and high-occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes. ■

Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB agenda on June 16 is expected to include:

- Status report on the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan and FY 2005-10 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and on the associated air quality conformity analysis.
- Status report of the task force on value pricing for transportation in the Washington region
- Update on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 8-hour ozone rule and non-attainment designations, and air quality conformity requirements for the Washington Region.
- Briefing on the Transportation Research Board (TRB) review of TPB modeling procedures.
- Approval of proposed amendment to the TPB bylaws to change the name of the Program Committee to "Steering Committee." ■

TPB Alphabet Soup

CAC	-	Citizens Advisory Committee
CLRP	-	Constrained Long-Range Plan
COG	-	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
DDOT	-	District Department of Transportation
EPA	-	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	-	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	-	Federal Transit Administration
MWAQC	-	Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
MDE	-	Maryland Department of the Environment
MDOT	-	Maryland Department of Transportation
SIP	-	State Implementation Plan for air quality
TIP	-	Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	-	Transportation Planning Board
UPWP	-	Unified Planning Work Program
VDOT	-	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	-	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Calendar of Events

Dates and times subject to change. All meetings are at COG unless otherwise indicated. If you are in need of special assistance to participate in meetings, please call (202) 962-3315 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Bicycle racks are located in the parking garage at 777 N. Capitol St., NE (Enter from 1st Street).

June 2004

- June 1 — Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- June 3 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS)
Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (1:00 pm)
- June 4 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- June 4 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- June 10 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- June 11 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- June 15 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- June 15 — Transportation Management Association (TMA) Advisory Group (noon)
- June 16 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

July 2004

- July 2 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- July 2 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- July 7 — Commuter Connections Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- July 13 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS)
Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- July 15 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- July 16 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- July 20 — Commuter Connections Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- July 20 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- July 20 — Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- July 21 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- July 22 — Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- July 22 — TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)
- July 23 — Travel Forecast Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- July 27 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) - *tentative*

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