

Regional Leaders Highlight Six-Year Funding Shortfalls

The Transportation Planning Board is launching a study to highlight transportation funding shortfalls through 2010. The study will quantify highway and transit needs for the next six years and recommend specific sources of revenue to meet those needs.

Officials who run the Metro system have warned they need an additional \$1.5 billion in the next six years to maintain existing

infrastructure, improve system security and purchase new cars and equipment to meet growing demand.

The new TPB study was initiated in response to comments that the financial analysis for the 2003 update to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) does not focus enough attention on unfunded near-term needs.

“Mr. White from WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) has argued that the financial analysis is focused too much on the long-range picture,” explained Ron Kirby, Director of COG’s Department of Transportation

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Speaking Out in Oxon Hill



More than 120 citizens gathered for a public meeting on October 1 in Oxon Hill, Maryland, organized by the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee. Peter Shapiro (at the podium), TPB chair and chair of the Prince George’s County Council, and Betty Hager Francis (at the table), director of the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation, were among officials who fielded questions on transportation options for southern Prince George’s County.

Forecasting Jobs and Households Over Thirty Years

More and more of the region’s workers in the next 30 years will be likely to come from places like Baltimore and West Virginia. This prediction—that job growth in the Washington region will outpace household growth—is one of many findings derived from the latest employment and household forecasts developed at the Council of Governments.

Paul DesJardin of the COG staff presented data from COG’s Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts at the Transportation Planning Board meeting on September 17.

The Cooperative Forecasts are particularly important to the work of the TPB because they

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Planning. “They [WMATA] believe the CLRP financial analysis didn’t give enough emphasis to short-run problems, including a substantial ‘ramp-up’ in rehab funding needs in the next couple of years.”

Two types of analysis

Mr. Kirby said the new analysis of unfunded, short-term needs will have a different purpose than the Constrained Long-Range Plan. He explained that the CLRP is intended, under federal mandate, to focus on funded—not unfunded—projects and programs. Federal law prohibits the plan from including projects that are not “reasonably anticipated” to receive funding.

Furthermore, the CLRP’s financial analysis presents aggregate expenditures and revenues over the time period of 2004-2030, but does not address year-by-year availability of revenues. Anticipated expenditures over this long-range time period must not exceed anticipated revenues.

The process of financial constraint in the CLRP creates a prioritization process through which unfunded projects are left out of the CLRP or simply included as “studies,” which are not required to be funded for project implementation. For example, the Corridor Cities Transitway in Montgomery County is being included in the 2003 CLRP as a funded project, while the Bi-County Transitway between Silver Spring and New Carrollton will be included as a study.

Left out of the CLRP

In contrast to the CLRP’s constrained financial analysis, the new short-term financial study will look at needs that have been left out of the CLRP.



Metro officials are warning that the system needs \$1.5 billion over the next six years for bare-bones capital improvements, including urgent repairs, new cars for ridership growth and security enhancements.

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board member, applauded the TPB’s decision to launch the new financial analysis. He emphasized that regional leaders must be careful about creating the impression that transportation needs are fully funded simply because the CLRP is fully funded—as required by federal law.

Mr. Zimmerman, who served last year as chair of the WMATA board, said the public is surprisingly unaware of the shortfalls facing transportation. “People love stories about a new rail line, a new road, that kind of thing... and when that gets covered by the media, it gives the impression that something is underway” although it may not actually be funded, said Mr. Zimmerman.

Marsha Kaiser of the Maryland Department of Transportation expressed reservations about the study. “It’s not this body that funds transportation needs,” she said. “It’s the state general assembly and the governor that funds the transportation needs in Maryland, and I’m not sure what this exercise really gets us, other than another platform to talk about the needs.”

The new financial analysis will be performed separately from the CLRP, which is scheduled to be approved in November. ■

Enhancing Emergency Preparedness

Local officials and agency representatives have been working continuously over the past year to enhance transportation components of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP).

David Snyder, Falls Church councilmember, briefed the Transportation Planning Board on these efforts at the Board’s September 17 meeting. Mr. Snyder chairs COG’s Emergency Transportation Work Group and is also chair of the TPB’s Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems Policy Task Force.

The RECP was approved by the COG Board on September 11, 2002. It included a transportation component and transportation evacuation coordination annex, which were largely developed through Mr. Snyder’s group.

Although the RECP represents an important achievement for the region's preparedness, it is still a work in progress. It is now being enhanced with more technical detail and supporting information, and improved integration with emergency management and federal agencies.

Mr. Snyder said his group recognizes that "public messaging before and during an incident is absolutely critical in the ability of the transportation agencies to respond effectively. In most cases, that public message will be, 'stay where you are.' So we're including this in our continuing efforts."

The Emergency Transportation Work Group is planning to conduct exercises in the coming months to study twelve different potential situations, such as region-wide evacuation, shelter-in-place, or widespread power failure.

Decision makers will be considering ways to institutionalize these ongoing efforts. Current efforts at COG on the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan are performed through a "voluntary participation format." Mr. Snyder said an alternative option might be to develop a "dedicated staff format" similar to the TRANSCOM agency in New York. ■

Other September Items

Other items on the TPB's September agenda included:

- **Briefing on the region's updated air quality improvement plan.** The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee approved on August 13 a new State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the attainment of federal air quality standards. The SIP includes proposed ceilings on transportation-related emissions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must make an "adequacy finding" on these ceilings before they can be used in the approval process for the TPB's 2003 Update to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the FY 2004-09 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under federal law, the TPB must make a "conformity determination" that emissions produced under the CLRP and TIP will fall within emissions ceilings in the SIP.

- **Status report on the CLRP and TIP approval process.** The TPB's 2003 Update to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and FY 2004-09 Transportation Improvement Program

(TIP) will be released for public comment on October 15. The air quality conformity determination (see explanation above) will be released on the same day. The TPB is scheduled to approve these documents on November 19.

- **Development of an interim CLRP and TIP.**

As a contingency measure, the TPB decided at its meeting on September 17 to develop and release an interim CLRP and TIP. These documents would enable federal funding to continue for eligible projects if a federal approval of the new CLRP and TIP does not occur by January 21, 2004.

- **TIP amendment for Dulles Rapid Transit.**

The TPB approved an amendment to the FY 2003-08 TIP to fund NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) activities and preliminary engineering for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project. ■

Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB's October 18 agenda will include:

- **Approval** of an amendment to the FY 2003-08 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for planning and right-of way for protective and hardship acquisitions for the **Intercountry Connector**. This amendment was requested by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

- **Approval** of an amendment to the FY 2003-08 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for components of the **Anacostia Corridor Demonstration Project**. These components are exempt from the air quality conformity requirement. The amendment was requested by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation.

- **Release** for public comment of the draft Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2003 Update to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and FY 2004-09 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- **Release** for public comment of the 2003 Update to the CLRP and the FY 2004-2009 TIP. ■

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provide the demographic growth and land use inputs for the TPB's travel demand forecasting and air quality emissions analysis. For example, based on the Cooperative Forecasts' predictions, the travel demand model will forecast that more commuters in the future will come from outside the region—people who will be traveling longer distances, and affecting congestion and emissions levels.

Local government planners, economists and demographers, working through COG's Cooperative Forecasting Subcommittee, develop the forecasts. The program combines regional data, which are based on national economic trends and regional demographics, with local projections of population, households and employment. These local projections are based on data about real estate development, market conditions, adopted land-use plans and planned transportation improvements.

The latest forecasts, called the Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts, cover the years 2000 to 2030. A COG committee of elected officials called the Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC) approved the forecasts in March so that they could be used this year in the TPB's update to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the air quality analysis (the "conformity determination") that must accompany the approval of the CLRP and the FY 2004-09 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The COG Board of Directors, which is also composed of local elected officials, is scheduled to approve the forecasts on October 8. The TPB is a separate body, independent from the COG board, although some elected officials serve on both bodies.

The cooperative forecasting program began with Round 1 in 1976, which covered the period 1970-1995. Over the years, the most accurate forecasts have been for households; at the regional scale, they have been on target over the last 30 years within two to three percentage points.

Household size and composition historically has been difficult to predict because of unpredictable societal changes. Thirty years ago, for example, planners could not have foreseen the number of baby-boomers who did not have

children, the number of women in the labor force and the surge in international immigration into the region.

A valuable data source

The Cooperative Forecasts provide a valuable data source that can be studied at a regional level or broken down by jurisdiction or even neighborhood. Mr. DesJardin highlighted some of the findings emerging from the new forecasts:

- The fastest rate of employment growth will occur in Loudoun County, where the number of jobs is expected to nearly triple by 2030. The new county comprehensive plan, adopted this year, is reflected in the new cooperative forecasts.

- Thirty percent of the region's household growth is forecast to occur in Montgomery and Loudoun counties.

- More than a third of new jobs in the region are forecast for Prince George's and Fairfax counties.

- Seven jurisdictions are expecting more new jobs in the next 30 years than they received in the last 30 years: District of Columbia, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince George's, Loudoun, Prince William (including Manassas and Manassas Park), Frederick and Stafford. (The cooperative forecasts include Calvert, Charles and Stafford counties, which are not TPB or COG member jurisdictions.)

- Eight jurisdictions are expecting more new households in the next 30 years than they received in the last 30 years: District of Columbia, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince George's, Loudoun, Charles, Frederick and Stafford.

Activity centers examined

Mr. DesJardin's analysis of the Cooperative Forecasts also examined "regional activity centers," which were designated through a COG process in 2002. The regional activity centers were determined through criteria that largely were linked to job concentration data from the cooperative forecasts. Activity centers are intended to have a mix of jobs, housing and services in a walkable environment. The TPB has endorsed a policy of strengthening transportation connections among regional activity centers.

The Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts indicate that nearly 100 percent of job growth in Alexandria will take place in "activity clusters."

(Activity clusters are groups of activity centers along transportation corridors.) The District of Columbia is forecast to have 98 percent of job growth in activity clusters, while Montgomery and Arlington counties will have 90 percent.

Officials from some jurisdictions were concerned last year when a larger number of activity centers was not designated within their borders because potential centers were not anticipated to have adequate densities specified in the activity centers criteria. Not surprisingly, in those jurisdictions with a relatively small number of activity centers, the Cooperative Forecasts did not show high concentrations of job growth in activity centers.

These job concentration figures could change in the future, however, when the designated list of activity centers is updated to reflect newly planned changes in land use. These changes will include the recent adoption of the Prince George's County Comprehensive Plan, which is focusing future employment and residential development in higher density centers. Growth assumptions from the new Prince George's County Comprehensive Plan have already been incorporated into the new COG Cooperative Forecasts. ■

Looking at Travel Demand Forecasting

The Transportation Planning Board has received the first report from a peer review of its travel demand modeling process.

The peer review, which was requested by the TPB in April 2002, is being conducted by the Transportation Research Board at the National Academies. The peer review is intended to provide comments on the effectiveness of the TPB's travel forecasting process and advice on how to further refine it.

Early in 2002, a coalition of environmental organizations issued a critique of the TPB's models, claiming they underestimated air pollution and overestimated traffic growth and congestion. Although staff questioned the basis for this critique, the TPB agreed the time was right for an independent review of its modeling.

The panel conducting the review is composed of three academics, two consultants and two

practitioners from metropolitan planning organizations—agencies, similar to the TPB, performing planning functions under federal mandate .

Travel demand models are essential tools for the development of the TPB's 25-year Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Any time these documents are amended, the region's road and transit networks, including all new projects, are "modeled." This process produces travel forecasts, including information on the number of miles people will be traveling (vehicle miles of travel), the way they will travel (mode choice), how fast they will be going, and many other pieces of information.

The first "letter report" from the peer review, which the TPB received on September 8, contained 11 observations. TPB staff agreed with five observations, which generally commended the TPB's modeling. On three of the observations, staff agreed that improvements might be made. Staff believes that three of the observations require further information and discussion.

The final peer review report, due December 31, will contain recommendations for improvements. The TPB will discuss the final report early in 2004 and determine how to respond. For more information, see www.mwcog.org/transportation/. ■

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
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).

October 2003

- October 1 — Outreach Meeting: "Looking at Transportation Options for Southern Prince George's County," Best Western Hotel, 6400 Oxon Hill Road, Oxon Hill, MD, 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Meeting sponsored by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee
- October 3 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- October 3 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- October 7 — Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Mass Marketing Group (10 am)
- October 7 — Outreach Meeting: "Transit-Oriented Development: What Could It Mean for the Eastern Side of the Region?" St. Luke's Center, 4925 E. Capitol St SE, Washington, DC., 7:00 - 8:30 pm. *Meeting sponsored by the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee.*
- October 8 — Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- October 9 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- October 10 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- October 14 — Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS)
Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- October 15 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- October 21 — Commuter Connections High Tech Ad-Hoc Group (8:30 am)
- October 21 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- October 21 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- October 21 — Guaranteed Ride Home Ad-Hoc Group (noon)

November 2003

- November 7 — TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- November 7 — TPB Program Committee (noon)
- November 13 — TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- November 14 — Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- November 18 — Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (8:30 am)
- November 18 — Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- November 18 — Commuter Operations Subcommittee (12:30 pm)
- November 18 — Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- November 18 — Outreach Meeting: "Should the Beltway Be Expanded With HOT Lanes?" Fairfax, VA, 7:30 - 9:00 pm. (Location near the Dunn Loring Metro station to be determined. See www.mwcog.org for details), *Meeting sponsored by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee*
- November 19 — Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- November 20 — COG Regional Transportation Safety Conference (8 am-2 pm), Kellogg Conference Center, Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. See www.mwcog.org for details.
- November 20 — Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- November 20 — TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (12:30 pm)
- November 21 — Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9 am)
- November 25 — Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) — *tentative*

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