

## TPB Expresses Views to Congress on Value Pricing

The Transportation Planning Board is urging Congress to make sure that funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is not cut if existing carpool lanes are converted to high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes. While conventional High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes qualify for funding from FTA, it is unclear whether HOT lanes would also qualify under pending legislation.

HOT lanes, which are under consideration in Maryland and Virginia, would be open both to carpoolers and to solo drivers paying tolls.

Because HOV lanes can provide free-flowing access to transit buses, they are counted as "fixed guideway miles" in the FTA funding formula. If

HOT lanes are not included in the federal formula, transit funding in the Washington region could be significantly reduced if HOV lanes are converted to HOT lanes.

After the TPB's Value Pricing Task Force raised these funding concerns at the June 16 board meeting, the TPB agreed to send a letter to Congress, urging that "variably-priced lanes that provide for unimpeded transit service should be recognized as 'fixed guideway miles' in the transit funding formula." The letter was sent on July 7 to the House-Senate conference committee currently debating the transportation

*See Value Pricing on page 2*

### Employer Recognition Awards



The QRC Division of Macro International, Inc. received one of six Commuter Connections 2004 Employer Outreach Awards on June 24. Fourteen percent of QRC's employers telework fulltime; 45 percent telework up to two days a week. Pictured left to right are Phil Mendelson, DC Councilmember and TPB Vice Chair; Guy Garnett of QRC; and Carol Petzold, Maryland State Delegate and TPB member.

## Intercounty Connector Presents New Challenges For Plan Analysis

TPB staff is tackling some new technical challenges, including an innovative tolling system for Maryland's Intercounty Connector (ICC), as it prepares to analyze the 2004 amendments to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLR/P) and the fiscal 2005-10 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**CLR/P/TIP  
2004**

Before the CLR/P amendments and the TIP are approved, they must be analyzed for air quality impacts and shown to be "in conformity" with the region's air quality improvement plan.

*See CLR/P/TIP Analysis on page 4*

## Value Pricing

*continued from page 1*

reauthorization bill. The bill will establish funding levels for highways and transit through 2009.

More broadly, the TPB urged Congress to expand the opportunities for state and local communities to use toll revenues to finance, operate, and manage new and expanded highway and public transit services. The letter asked the conferees to “adopt provisions that will enhance state and local discretion to use time-of-day tolls as a long-term traffic management strategy.”

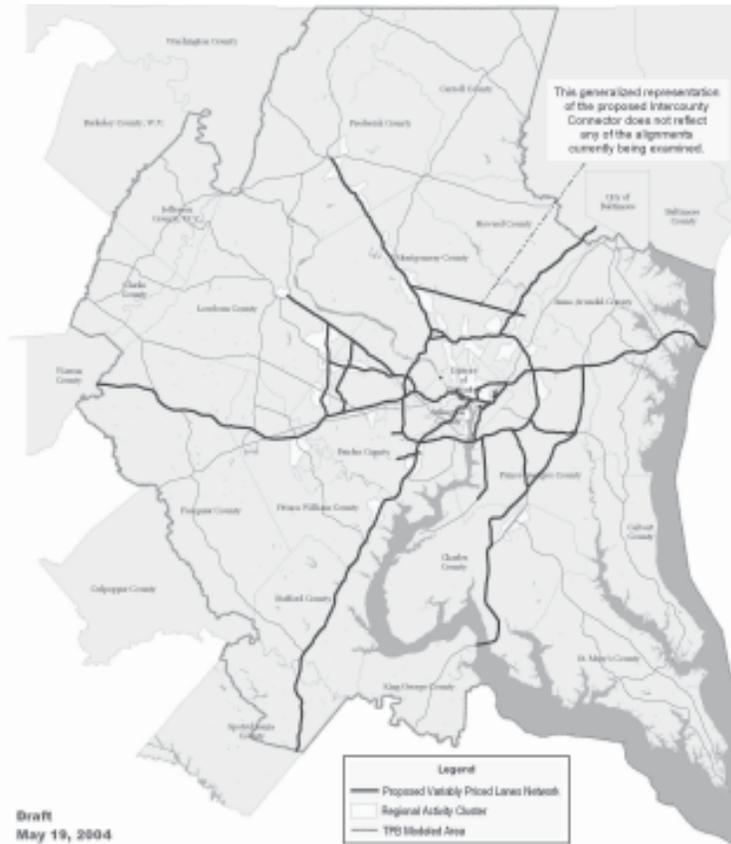
The letter further asserts that “states and local communities should be able to implement tolls to manage congestion and reduce emissions on existing facilities, as well as to finance the development of new facilities.”

The House and Senate versions of the bill contain divergent provisions on tolling. The Senate version would give states broad authority to levy tolls and experiment with various pricing approaches. The House version would allow states to toll only new lanes and limits the use of toll revenues to construction and operation of the new lanes.

It is unlikely that the tolling issue will be settled before the conference committee resolves the more contentious issue of the legislation’s total funding level. While the Senate bill sets funding at \$318 billion and the House version at \$283.2 billion, the White House has vowed to veto anything greater than \$256 billion.

The TPB decided to speak out on tolling at the recommendation of the Value Pricing Task Force, which the Board appointed last year to examine how value pricing could benefit the Washington region. Value pricing, in the

## *HOV/HOT Lane Network To Be Tested in Scenario Study*



**The Value Pricing Task Force is developing a HOT/HOV network that will be tested in the TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. The study is looking at the long-term impacts of various transportation and land use scenarios.**

terminology of transportation planning, means giving drivers and transit riders the option of paying an extra fee for the value of reduced congestion.

The most commonly discussed value pricing mechanism is HOT lanes, which lone drivers can use for a toll and carpools can use for free or a discounted toll. Tolls are typically paid through electronic transponders attached to car windshields. Most HOT lanes automatically adjust tolls based on congestion levels—called “variable pricing.”

The state departments of transportation (DOTs) in the Washington region are seriously considering the implementation of variably-

priced lanes on several existing and proposed new facilities. One project that has gained attention is a proposal from the Fluor Daniel Company to build HOT lanes on the Capital Beltway between Springfield and Route 193 in Virginia.

Maryland is considering express toll lanes—special highway lanes that could be used by paying a fee—on I-270, the Capital Beltway in Maryland, and portions of I-95 north of Baltimore. The District of Columbia is looking at variable pricing for parking and WMATA is currently implementing Smart card technologies which might accommodate new pricing strategies in the future.

One of the major activities of the Task Force has been the development of a regional HOV/HOT lane scenario for the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. The study will consider the long-term effects of various transportation and land use scenarios. Future activities of the Task Force include developing a proposal for a region-wide system of variably priced lanes and discussing parking pricing strategies, such as parking cash-out and a regional parking impact fee.

For more information about the Value Pricing Task Force, go to [www.mwcog.org/committee](http://www.mwcog.org/committee) and click on "TPB Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation." ■

## Other June Agenda Items

The TPB's June agenda also included:

- **Briefing on the Brookings Institution's research report: "Washington's Metro: Deficits by Design."** Rob Puentes of the Brookings Institution briefed the TPB on a new report that says Metro's "extraordinary lack of dedicated funding sources" is unique and makes it vulnerable to recurring financial crises. The report recommends six potential dedicated revenue sources for government officials to consider.
- **Briefing on the Environmental Protection Agency's 8-Hour Ozone Rule and Non-Attainment Designations, and potential air quality implications for the Washington Region.** Joan Rohlf of the COG staff briefed the TPB on

new regulations issued by EPA, and their potential impact on the TPB's air quality conformity process.

- **Approval of an amendment to the TPB bylaws to change the name of the Program Committee to "Steering Committee."** ■

## Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB's July agenda will include:

- **Approval** of a proposed agreement between the TPB and the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) to conduct the transportation planning process in the portion of Stafford County that is part of the Washington DC-Virginia-Maryland urbanized area.
- **Progress report** on actions to improve regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents.
- **Review of proposed work program** to address the travel demand modeling topics identified in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) review.
- **Briefing** on the first phase results of the TPB Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.
- **Status report** on the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and FY2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and on the associated air quality conformity analysis and Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMs).
- **Briefing** on the new air quality conformity requirements for the Washington Region under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent 8-Hour Rule and on proposed non-attainment area designations for fine particles (PM 2.5). ■

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## CLRP/TIP Analysis *continued from page 1*

This air quality conformity analysis is expected to be completed this September. The TPB is scheduled to vote in the fall on whether to approve the CLRP amendments and TIP.

The proposed tolling system for the ICC is perhaps the most difficult analytical issue associated with this year's CLRP amendments, according to Ron Kirby, COG's Director of Transportation Planning. The ICC is being planned as a "managed facility," in which tolls will automatically increase when the road gets too congested and go down when traffic thins out. Such an automatic tolling system—known as "variable pricing" in the language of transportation planning—will be designed to maintain a speed of 50 miles-per-hour.

Mr. Kirby said the effects of variable pricing will have impacts on travel demand beyond the ICC. "If the toll gets too high, people may go somewhere else, shift to buses or travel at a different time of day."

The ICC, which would run between I-270 near Gaithersburg and I-95/U.S. 1 near Laurel, was among 10 major projects submitted for this year's CLRP and TIP.

In a divided vote in April, the TPB approved the inclusion of the ICC in the air quality analysis for the CLRP and TIP.

In a presentation to the TPB on June 16, Mr. Kirby described key activities associated with the air quality conformity analysis:

- **Other ICC project details.** In addition to the "variable pricing" tolling provision, TPB staff has received details from the Maryland Department of Transportation on other characteristics of the ICC, including interchange locations and transit service enhancements. Two alignments for the road are being analyzed. It is specified as a six-lane roadway, to be in place by 2010.

- **Land activity forecasts.** The air quality conformity analysis is using a new draft version of the Cooperative Forecasts—called Round 6.4—which provide forecasts of jobs, housing and population. The Cooperative Forecasts are developed by the Planning Directors Advisory Committee at COG.

Affected jurisdictions are also developing refined forecasts reflecting the two different ICC alignments.

- **Transit fare increases.** Fare increases, programmed to take effect soon at several transit properties, are being incorporated into the travel demand model.

- **Travel model refinements.** (Version 2.1D). The TPB is updating its travel demand modeling process to reflect additional developmental work in two areas: the review by the Transportation Research Board and the managed lane concept for the Intercounty Connector.

- **Mobile6.2 Emissions Factor Model.** The Environmental Protection Agency has issued an updated version of this model used for the emissions forecasting process. Staff is currently testing the model for use on the CLRP amendments and TIP.

For more information on the CLRP and TIP project submissions, go to [www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org). ■

### TPB Alphabet Soup

<b>CAC</b>	-	Citizens Advisory Committee
<b>CLRP</b>	-	Constrained Long-Range Plan
<b>COG</b>	-	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
<b>DDOT</b>	-	District Department of Transportation
<b>EPA</b>	-	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<b>FHWA</b>	-	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FTA</b>	-	Federal Transit Administration
<b>HOT lanes</b>	-	High Occupancy/Toll lanes
<b>HOV</b>	-	High Occupancy Vehicle
<b>ICC</b>	-	Intercounty Connector
<b>MWAQC</b>	-	Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
<b>MDOT</b>	-	Maryland Department of Transportation
<b>SIP</b>	-	State Implementation Plan for air quality
<b>TIP</b>	-	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TPB</b>	-	Transportation Planning Board
<b>UPWP</b>	-	Unified Planning Work Program
<b>VDOT</b>	-	Virginia Department of Transportation
<b>WMATA</b>	-	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## Travel Forecasting Improvements Underway

The TPB's travel forecasting procedures are undergoing a number of key improvements in response to a review conducted by the Transportation Research Board at the National Academies.

"This has been a very productive and valuable undertaking from a lot of perspectives," said Ron Kirby, COG Director of Transportation Planning, when he spoke to the TPB on June 16.

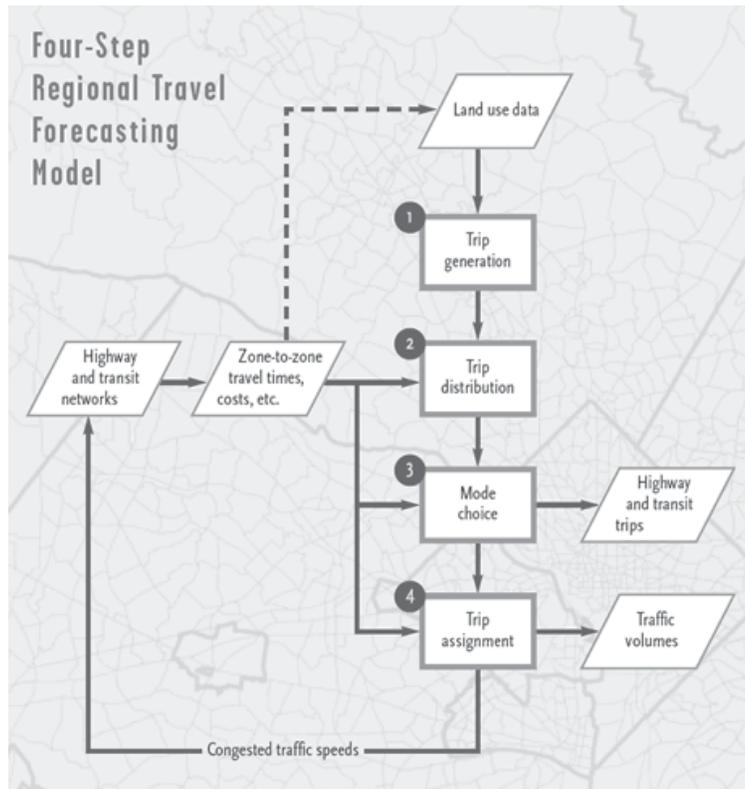
Two years ago, the TPB asked the Transportation Research Board to conduct an "arms-length" review of its modeling procedures as part of the TPB's ongoing program to upgrade its travel forecasting methods. The review committee issued its first report on September 8, 2003 and its final report on May 10, 2004.

The review panel included three academics, two consultants and two practitioners from agencies similar to the TPB.

Out of 11 observations made in the first report of the review panel, five required no action by the TPB. Six observations offer potential for improvement. The TPB's work program will address these six topics: 1) improving model validation, 2) light duty commercial vehicles, 3) bus network characterization, 4) use of adjustment factors, 5) speed feedback and mode choice, and 6) hourly traffic volumes, speeds, and emissions estimation.

The model examined by the review panel is known as Version 2.1C. It was used for the analysis of the 2003 update to the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the fiscal 2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Those documents and accompanying analysis have been approved by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency.

An enhanced model, Version 2.1 D, is under development. It will be used for this year's CLRP amendments and the fiscal 2005-2010 TIP. The inclusion of the Intercountry Connector in this



**Virtually all U.S. metropolitan areas use a "four-step" model to forecast regional travel.**

year's CLRP and TIP is presenting new challenges for modeling which will be addressed in Version 2.1 D. (see "Intercountry Connector Presents..." on page 1.)

As an issue of national concern, the review panel found that travel demand modeling is not well documented throughout the United States. The panel members indicated they had no set of basic guidance against which to evaluate the TPB's practice. As a result, the U.S. Department of Transportation is launching a project to document travel demand modeling practice across the county and make some comparisons.

"We're trying to keep track of what's going on around the county, but frankly, the U.S. DOT needs to do more to help all of us keep track," said Mr. Kirby.

To see the documents from the modeling review, see [www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org). ■

# 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).

## July

- July 7 – Commuter Connections Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- July 9 – TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- July 9 – TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 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 Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)

## August

- August 3 – Regional Transportation Demand Management Marketing Group (10 am)

## September

- September 3 – TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- September 3 – TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- September 9 – TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- September 10 – Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- September 14 – Commuter Operations Subcommittee (10 am)
- September 14 – Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- September 14 – Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- September 15 – Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- September 17 – Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- September 21 – Travel Management Subcommittee (11:15 am) - *tentative*
- September 21 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- September 23 – Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- September 23 – Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

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