

Participation Plan to be Released for Public Comment

The Transportation Planning Board is scheduled on September 13 to release its new draft Participation Plan for a 45-day public comment period. The document is the first of its kind for the TPB.

The new plan recognizes the need to develop a variety of tools and activities to reach out to people with different levels of interest and expertise. "The TPB serves a number of different constituencies," said TPB staff member Sarah Crawford when she presented the draft plan at the TPB meeting on July 18. "We recognize that we should tailor materials to the levels of understanding of those constituencies."

The TPB is required to develop a Participation Plan to meet the federal requirements of the 2005 federal transportation reauthorization legislation (SAFETEA-LU), which encouraged agencies like the TPB to create a proactive participation strategy.

Since 1994, public involvement activities at the TPB have been guided by a 6-page Public Involvement Process, a procedural document that was most recently revised in 1999. Using the existing Process as a starting point, TPB staff developed the new Participation Plan to be a

*See **Participation Plan** on page 2*

Scenario Study Outreach Wraps Up

After several months of talking to audiences around the Washington Region about the TPB's Scenario Study, TPB staff is reporting that many citizens appear to broadly agree with the premises and solutions underlying the study. But many of these same individuals expressed concerns about continuing challenges that might be linked to the study's scenarios, such as housing affordability, traffic impacts and crowding on public transit.

At the TPB meeting on July 18, TPB staff member Darren Smith described the Report on TPB Scenario Study Outreach Activities and Feedback Summary. He gave a recap of the outreach events and cited examples of regional consensus on issues related to growth and development. Smith said that while most participants at public forums agreed on the factors causing regional congestion, and there was some consensus on a strategy of



At outreach forums around the region, citizens learned about the TPB's scenario study and had a chance to build their own scenarios in an interactive exercise.

trying to alleviate congestion by concentrating growth in activity centers served by transit, audiences identified many challenges and concerns about implementation of this strategy.

*See **Scenario Study Outreach** on page 3*

Participation Plan *continued from page 1*

more citizen-friendly document reflecting goals and strategies.

The Participation Plan is partly based on recommendations from a consultant study of the TPB's outreach efforts. That evaluation emphasized that the TPB serves constituencies with different informational needs and that TPB materials need to be tailored to each constituency's level of knowledge. TPB staff also identified continuing challenges to participation in the TPB

process. Among other things,

the plan recognizes the need to create realistic expectations of the TPB process and to help the public identify how most

effectively to get involved in transportation planning.

The Participation Plan focuses on tailoring outreach and involvement activities to three key types of constituencies: the "involved" public, the "informed" public and the "interested" public. These three categories represent a continuum in typical levels of interest and expertise, ranging from very active individuals like members of the Citizens Advisory Committee to members of the general public. This distinction addresses the realization that not all members of the public may know about the TPB and that requirements for information about regional transportation planning may be different for each constituency.

The "involved public" are those who already know about the TPB and participate in the TPB process. The "informed public" are people who may understand local and regional transportation planning, but may not be familiar with the TPB. The TPB can improve efforts to inform and educate these individuals to feel empowered to participate in transportation planning activities at the local, state and regional levels.

The plan recognizes the need to create realistic expectations of the TPB process and to help the public identify how to get involved most effectively.

The "interested public" is described in the Participation Plan as anyone in the region who uses the transportation system. The TPB can simplify the regional transportation planning process for this majority constituency and provide them with materials that are easy to access and understand.

Because the Participation Plan is expected to remain in effect for several years, it provides broad statements of goals and strategies. Using the plan, TPB staff will develop a Participation Program on an annual basis to strategically identify activities and evaluate recent experiences with public involvement.

Since developing the first draft in May, staff has briefed the TPB's committees and other stakeholders on the Participation Plan. These discussions have included the Citizens Advisory Committee and Access for All Advisory Committee. More recently, staff hosted a focus group to see how the themes underlying the Participation Plan resonate with community leaders.

The Participation Plan will be released for a 45-day public comment period on September 13. The TPB is scheduled to approve the Participation Plan at its November 14 meeting. ■

TPB Alphabet Soup

CAC	- Citizens Advisory Committee
CLRP	- Constrained Long-Range Plan
COG	- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
DDOT	- District Department of Transportation
FHWA	- Federal Highway Administration
FTA	- Federal Transit Administration
MDOT	- Maryland Department of Transportation
TIP	- Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	- Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	- Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Scenario Study Outreach

continued from page 1

These challenges included housing affordability as a driver of land use patterns and municipal fiscal motivations encouraging job growth above housing.

While TPB staff members have been giving presentations around the region about the Scenario Study since 2004, following encouragement by the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to spread the word about the study, since fall 2006 the outreach effort has had the express intent of obtaining feedback from the region's citizens, planners, and public officials. The compilation of this feedback into a report is intended to provide the TPB with useful background as the Board determines the next phase of the Scenario Study and the direction of related regional activities.

The report describes a concern on the part of many of the region's citizens that government would not provide adequate infrastructure, especially road and transit capacity, to accommodate a strategy of concentrated growth. Many participants indicated that to them, the expected detriments to local quality of life would outweigh the potential benefits of such a regional strategy. Audiences also talked about the need for a commitment on the part of local jurisdictions to accommodate growth with adequate transportation infrastructure, especially transit capacity.

Smith concluded his presentation to the TPB by listing eight opportunities for regional action, among which are communicating a cohesive message about regional challenges related to growth, advocating for more funding for transportation improvements, providing more tools for localities to "do density right," and improving the process through which transportation projects are prioritized in the region. He said the next steps would be for the TPB to consider prior CAC recommendations and this public feedback to determine future Scenario Study activities. He noted that there are several common themes between the CAC recommendations and the feedback report.

After considering these common themes and recommendations, staff recommended creation of a TPB subcommittee or task force to provide

policy stewardship for the future of the scenario study and related regional activities that might stem from the study. Board member Michael Knapp has agreed to chair this group, and staff will present the TPB with more details on its proposed formation and mission for approval at the September TPB meeting.

You can read the full Outreach Feedback Summary Report at www.mwcog.org/transportation. ■

Other July Agenda Items

The TPB's July 18 agenda included the following items in addition to the briefings described elsewhere in this newsletter:

- Approval of the establishment of the *Regional Taxicab Regulators Task Force*. For more information on this new task force, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb and see Item 7 for the July 18 meeting.
- Briefing on the *dismissed complaint against the TPB in the Intercounty Connector (ICC) lawsuit*. The board was briefed on the complaint by Environmental Defense and the Sierra Club in the ICC lawsuit. To read the briefing materials, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb and see Item 8 for the July 18 meeting.
- Briefing on the responses to TPB comments on the *Freight Railroad Realignment Feasibility Study*. At the May TPB meeting, the board provided a number of comments on this study, which was sponsored by DDOT, conducted by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), and funded by an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant. To read the briefing materials, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb and see Item 9 for the July 18 meeting. ■

TPB News, 777 North Capitol St, NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239
202-962-3295; jswanson@mwcog.org
"TPB News" at www.mwcog.org/transportation

TLC Program Finishes Pilot Round

The Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program, a new initiative designed to support community planning efforts, wrapped up its pilot activities on June 30. Beginning as a six-month pilot in January 2007, the TLC program was designed with two components:

1. The Regional TLC Clearinghouse is a web-based source of information about transportation/ land-use coordination, including experiences with transit-oriented development and other key strategies. In addition to offering brief information and website links on a broad sampling of projects, the clearinghouse will more thoroughly document the technical assistance provided through the TPB's TLC program.

2. The TLC Technical Assistance Program is providing focused consultant assistance to local jurisdictions working on creative, forward-thinking and sustainable plans and projects. Technical assistance may include a range of services, such as: public involvement facilitation; development and utilization of visualization techniques; streetscape and infill design assistance; assistance with scoping longer term planning studies; and help with other challenges related to strengthening transportation and land-use coordination.

Any local jurisdiction in the Metropolitan Washington region that is a member of the TPB was eligible to apply for TLC technical assistance. In response to the pilot program's call for applications in January 2007, the TPB received 22 applications and selected six for the first round of technical assistance, which ended in June 2007. These jurisdictions received up to a



The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Pedestrian Safety Study identified both short- and long-term potential improvements for an area that currently has a high pedestrian accident rate and is planning for a future Purple Line transit station.

value of \$20,000 in assistance provided by a rapid-response team of consultants.

The pilot round included the following six projects:

- *Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: Takoma/Langley Crossroad Pedestrian Safety Study.* Building on recent safety enhancements by the State of Maryland, this study proposed improving signs, widening the medians and adding crossing signals to improve safety in the vicinity of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and University Boulevard (MD 193). The TLC study will serve as background for the upcoming Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan, which among other things will prepare the area for anticipated stations of the Purple Line

between Silver Spring and New Carrollton.

- **St. Charles Urbanized Area: Urban Roads Standards.** Recent planning efforts in the Waldorf and Bryans Road areas of Charles County have promoted more compact development, but county officials believe a missing link in the transformation of these communities has been the inflexibility of current road standards to accommodate needed design changes. TLC consultants proposed street design standards for use in these communities that will be more conducive to pedestrians and mixed-use environments.

- **Fairfax County: Levels of Service around Transit Oriented Development.** Traditional standards for traffic flow have tended to focus on moving vehicles with minimal interruption. A TLC study requested by Fairfax County has looked at alternative standards for acceptable traffic flow near transit-



ICF International

Planners held a public meeting as part of the Potomac Avenue Station Area Scoping in the District of Columbia.

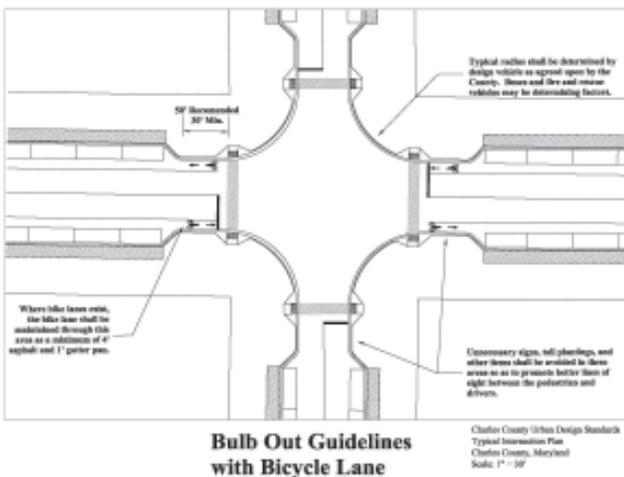
are expected to grow significantly, bringing new demands on housing and infrastructure. TLC consultants developed a scope of work for a future study to determine how Prince William County might respond to these new growth pressures.

- **District of Columbia: Scoping Assistance for Potomac Avenue Station Area Plan.** Consultants worked with DC staff and stakeholders to identify key land-use, transportation, and development issues for examination in a future Revitalization Strategy that will address public space, site-specific market analysis and way-finding improvements around the Potomac Avenue Station on Capitol Hill.

- **Public Presentation on Density Issues (for use in a number of jurisdictions).** Consultants developed presentation materials on density issues in consultation with TPB staff and jurisdictions facing development pressure and community concerns about increased density.

An evaluation of the TLC pilot will be conducted in the fall of 2007. Preliminary comments by the recipients of technical assistance and the TLC consultants indicate that the program's initial efforts were successful in providing quick turnaround, responding to local and regional needs for small "start-up" efforts, and convening key agency stakeholders to address local issues in a comprehensive manner.

The TPB currently plans to initiate a second round of the TLC program in the fall of 2007. ■



Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

TLC consultants for the Charles County project recommended street design standards that will be more conducive to pedestrians and mixed-use development.

oriented development that attempt to balance the needs of mixed-use, pedestrian friendly environments with the need to keep vehicles moving.

- **Prince William County, Scoping Assistance for Impacts of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Actions.** Under upcoming BRAC changes, military installations at Fort Belvoir and Quantico

GoogleEarth™ Offers New View of Regional Plan

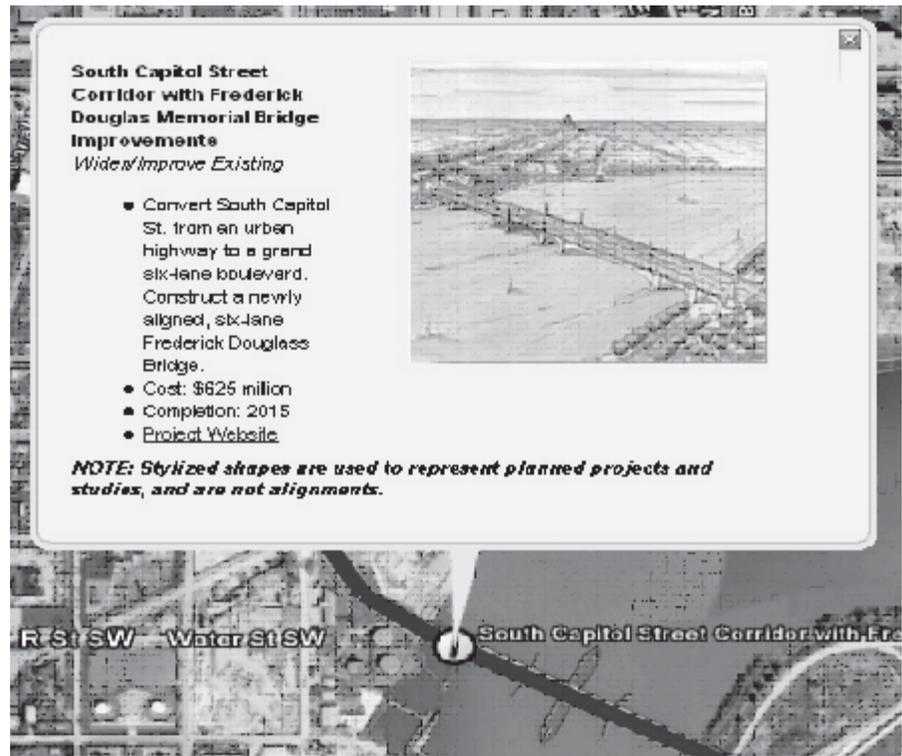
Zooming in from outer space in less than 15 seconds, you can now use aerial photographic maps on the internet to find the approximate alignments of all the major projects included in the region's long-range transportation plan.

TPB staff has worked with GoogleEarth™, a computer program that uses satellite and aerial photography, to create a web-based depiction of the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). The new maps use lines for roads and transit projects, and points for intersections and transit stations. Each line or point is colored to indicate which type of project it is. For example, highway projects are shades of red and studies are shades of blue. Each project shape (line or point) is labeled. When the label is clicked, an information window pops up to display details about the project including a description, cost, completion date, and links to external project web sites.

The 2005 federal transportation reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU) called for states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB to use visualization techniques to strengthen public participation in the planning and project delivery process, and specifically to aid the public in understanding proposed plans.

TPB staff's new visualization of the CLRP using Google Earth™ was presented to the TPB at its July 18 meeting. This new way of representing the projects and studies in the CLRP is the first step in TPB staff's use of advanced visualization techniques.

Historically, maps presenting the CLRP have been available in printed materials and on the internet. However, these static maps are produced at the regional scale, and only provide



The new online maps of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) use GoogleEarth™ software with a number of added features, such as pop-up descriptions of major projects as shown in the example above.

a bird's-eye view of the planned projects. The traditional maps provide only a limited understanding of the spatial relationships between planned projects and the rest of the region.

The new visualization of the CLRP uses Google Earth™, the de facto online standard for satellite mapping. Google Earth™ is a free software package that constructs a virtual Earth out of satellite and aerial photographs. Navigation tools make it easy to zoom in and out, and pan back and forth within this virtual environment. Google Earth™ includes many useful built-in layers which are displayed on top of the mosaic of satellite photos, including jurisdictional boundaries, highways and transit lines. Google Earth™ also allows other content providers to produce data which can be easily downloaded and displayed.

In addition to the CLRP project and study shapes, the visualization also displays the

Activity Centers from the Round 7.0a Cooperative Land Use Forecast. When clicking on one of the activity centers, an information window pops up displaying current and projected employment and population statistics.

The new visualization of the CLRP is only the first step in TPB staff efforts in using Google Earth™ to provide advanced visualizations of planning efforts. SAFETEA-LU also requires the TPB to consult with other jurisdictional agencies to gather a variety of geographical data on parks, wetlands, endangered species, sensitive habitats and historical locations. These data layers will be portrayed in the TPB's Google Earth™ visualization alongside planned projects and studies.

In addition, this tool can be used to provide visualizations of other geographical data. For example, the TPB's scenario study has analyzed a number of scenarios comprising unfunded transportation projects and land-use patterns that would change current forecasts. The details about the transportation and land-use changes included in these scenarios will be incorporated into the Google Earth™ visualization. ■

**PUBLIC FORUM ON THE
FY 2008 – 2013
TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
(TIP)**

**FOR THE WASHINGTON
METROPOLITAN REGION
October 11, 2007
7:00 p.m.**

In accordance with new federal regulations, the TPB will host a public forum on this year's TIP on October 11, as part of the regular meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee. In addition to TPB staff, speakers will include representatives from the departments of transportation for Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. For more information, contact Jerry Miller at 202-962-3319 or gkmiller@mwkog.org.

Upcoming Agenda Items

The TPB's September 19 agenda will include:

- Approval of an amendment to the FY 2007-2012 TIP to include eight new projects and modify funding for ten projects, as requested by VDOT.
- Approval of projects for funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom projects of the of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Approval of a TPB Task Force to provide policy guidance for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study (RMAS).
- Briefing on the TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee comments on the 2007 CLRP.

- Update on the regional "Street Smart" pedestrian and bicycle safety education campaign.
- Review of the draft TPB Participation Plan
- Review of the draft Call for Projects and schedule for the air quality conformity assessment for the 2008 CLRP and FY 2009-2015 TIP. ■

Subscribe Online

Readers of the *TPB News* can now subscribe to get the newsletter and other TPB-related materials online. Visit COG's website at www.mwcog.org/subscribe, enter your name and email address and sign up. Monthly notifications are sent out directing readers to find the *TPB News* on the web. In addition to the newsletter, readers can subscribe to other publications and TPB meeting materials.

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).

September 2007

- 7 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 7 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 11 **Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)**
- 12 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 13 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 14 Joint Technical Working Group on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 18 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 18 Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 18 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 18 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (2 pm)
- 19 Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation (10:30 am)
- 19 **Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 25 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- 25 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)

October 2007

- 5 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 5 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 9 **Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)**
- 11 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 11 Public Forum on the FY2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (7 pm) *See box on page 7 of this newsletter for details*
- 16 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 16 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evaluation Group (noon)
- 17 **Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

November 2007

- 2 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 2 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 13 **Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)**
- 14 Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation (10:30 am)
- 14 **Transportation Planning Board (noon)***
- 20 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 20 Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 27 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- 29 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 30 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)

* The TPB meeting will be held a week earlier than normal in November because of the Thanksgiving holiday.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact John Swanson at jswanson@mwkog.org, (202) 962-3295 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Allow seven working days for preparation of material.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. Postage Paid
Washington, D.C.
Permit #9770