

Zimmerman Urges TPB to Take a New Look at Old Ideas

In his final message to the TPB, outgoing Chairman Chris Zimmerman called upon regional leaders “to reexamine ideas that may have been rejected and look for new ones that

have never been put on the table.”

“I think the time has come to look at any proposal that has the potential to make even a marginal transportation improvement at low cost,” said the chairman as he reflected upon the past year at the December 15 TPB meeting.

Chairman Zimmerman

described three proposals that he believes deserve renewed consideration:

- Implement a 24/7 incident management organization for the region that would allow damaged vehicles to be cleared more quickly, adjust traffic signal timing and provide more timely information to the public.
- Take some seats out of Metrorail cars to provide more capacity. “Sometimes standing on the train is not as bad as being left standing on the platform,” said Zimmerman.
- Restore HOV capacity to the 14th Street Bridge. Zimmerman emphasized that HOV facilities on the bridge would permit direct bus service from Virginia into the District of

Columbia. The HOV lanes were eliminated more than 20 years ago. Mr. Zimmerman said that in the 1970s, with the advent of Metrorail, direct bus service was considered duplicative.

Increased transit use, however, makes the “old idea” worth reconsidering.

Chairman Zimmerman challenged regional leaders to add other proposals to his list. “Instead of finding reasons not to do things, find reasons to do them,” he said.

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Outgoing TPB Chairman Chris Zimmerman, left, was honored at the December 15 board meeting. “You’ve maneuvered us through some difficult issues,” said 2005 Chairman Phil Mendelson, right.

Survey Finds Commuters More Aware of Options

Recent survey findings suggest that Washington area residents are increasingly aware of commuting options besides driving alone and are willing to consider alternative modes of getting to work.

Nick Ramfos, head of the TPB’s Commuter Connections programs, presented the results of the 2004 State of the Commute survey to the



Eighteen percent of survey respondents who do not currently telecommute said they “would and could” telecommute if given the opportunity.

See **Commuter Survey** on page 3

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Describing the past year, Chairman Zimmerman noted a number of accomplishments at the TPB, including the efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness, the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study, the Street Smart campaign and Disability Awareness activities.

But he said he was most proud of the board's continuing efforts to raise awareness about the region's transportation funding shortfall. In February, the TPB released a study showing the region needs to more than double its anticipated revenue over the next six years. He said it was the board's "duty" to broadcast this message.

At least on a short-term basis, Mr. Zimmerman said, these efforts were successful. Local jurisdictions agreed to fund the "Metro Matters" program in October, covering urgent six-year needs for the region's transit system. Also in the fall, the Council of Governments, the Board of Trade and the Federal City Council jointly established a blue ribbon panel to investigate long-term funding solutions for Metro.

Incoming TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson recognized Mr. Zimmerman for his leadership. "You've done a great job this year," he said. "You've maneuvered us through some difficult issues. I want to thank you for your service to the TPB and to the region." ■

Other December Agenda Items

Other items on the TPB's December agenda included:

- *Briefing on the draft results of the 8-hour air quality conformity assessment for the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2005-10 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).* New EPA regulations require the TPB to show that under the new "8-hour standard" for ozone, the CLRP and TIP will meet regional air quality improvement goals.
- *Briefing on the draft 2005 Solicitation Document and air quality conformity assessment schedule for 2005.* The Solicitation

Committee Chairs Honored



Chris Zimmerman, 2004 TPB Chair, presented plaques to outgoing committee chairs at the TPB meeting on December 15. In the top picture is Rick Rybeck, 2004 Chair of the TPB Technical Committee. Pictured below is Dennis Jaffe, 2004 Chair of the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee.

Document lays out the official process for submitting projects for the CLRP and TIP.

- *Appointment of the six members designated by the 2004 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the CAC for the Year 2005.* Six members were appointed: Nathaniel Bryant and Steve Cafilich for Maryland; Harold Foster and Lee Schoenecker for D.C.; Allen Muchnick and Stewart Schwartz for Maryland. At the January TPB meeting, the board will approve an additional nine CAC members who will be nominated by the TPB officers. ■

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Commuter Survey *continued from page 1*

TPB on December 15. The survey is conducted every three years.

The survey found that more than half (55%) of respondents had seen, heard or read advertising about commuting options in the six months prior to the survey. Of those who recalled the ads, 18 percent said they would be more likely to consider ridesharing or public transportation after seeing or hearing the advertising. Two-thirds of respondents said they had heard of Commuter Connections.

Mr. Ramfos emphasized that telecommuting has tremendous potential for growth. More than 12 percent of survey respondents said they telecommuted at least occasionally, but an additional 18 percent of commuters who do not telecommute today “could and would” telecommute if given the opportunity.

The survey showed that facilities and services are widely available for alternative commuting. Two-thirds (68%) of respondents said that public transportation was available in their home and work areas. More than half (53%) said their employers offered one or more alternative mode incentives or support services to employees at their worksites.

Driving alone, on the other hand, is not getting easier. According to the survey, the average one-way commuting distance jumped from 15.5 miles in 2001 to 16.5 miles this year. Of the 7,200 area workers surveyed, 29 percent said their commutes were more difficult than they were a year ago—mostly due to longer commuting distances or increased congestion. More than half said their commutes were about the same.

Nonetheless, driving alone is a persistent and growing practice. Seventy four percent of commute trips were made by driving alone, an increase from 72.6 percent in 2001. Carpool/vanpool trips exhibited a drop from 7.6 percent to 6.1 percent between 2001 and 2004. Trips made by transit and bike/walk were essentially unchanged from 2001 to 2004.

Free parking continues to be pervasive and appears to be an incentive for driving alone.

The majority of respondents (66%) said their employers offered free, on-site or off-site parking, about the same as in 2001. The survey found that of commuters with free parking provided by their employers, 86 percent drive to work alone. Only 47 percent of commuters drive alone if they lack the free parking benefits.

Commuter Connections is a regional commuter assistance program supported by the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Departments of

Transportation with state and federal transportation funds.

Commuter Connections programs were initiated to reduce vehicle emissions associated with solo driving.

The TPB classifies the Commuter Connections programs, along with other actions, as Transportation Emission Reductions Measures (TERMs), which are designed to help the region reach emissions reduction goals established in the region’s air quality improvement plan.

The six Commuter Connections TERMS are the Telework Resource Center, Integrated Rideshare program, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, Employer Outreach for Bicycling and Regional Mass Marketing.

The State of the Commute survey is designed to estimate the effectiveness of these measures. The survey sample comprised 7,200 randomly selected workers in the metropolitan area. The full survey report is expected to be released later this spring.

For more information on the State of the Commute survey, go to www.mwcog.org. See the presentation materials for Item 11 under the TPB’s December 15 meeting. ■

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Talking With Citizens About Future Scenarios

What if the Washington region grew differently? This question set the stage for a series of public outreach meetings launched in December by the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The meetings focus on the scenarios and initial findings of the TPB's Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

To date, two meetings have been held: on December 7 in Fair Lakes, Virginia, and on December 8 in Gaithersburg, Maryland. TPB Vice Chair and Montgomery County Council

Member Michael Knapp hosted the Gaithersburg forum.



TPB Vice Chair Michael Knapp moderated the December 8 public meeting.

Initiated in 2001, the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study is examining the transportation effects of several bold, hypothetical, scenarios that shift future housing and job growth to different places in the region.

For example, the study looks at the effect of increased development around transit stations or increased job and housing growth in the eastern side of the region. Other scenarios shift jobs and/or housing so that commuters live closer to their places of work.

The study then compares the predicted outcomes of these scenarios to the goals and objectives set forth in the TPB Vision, such as reduced vehicle miles of travel and increased transit use.

Future study phases will layer different packages of transportation improvements onto some of the land use scenarios, and examine the synergistic effects of changing both land use and transportation infrastructure. The study is scheduled for completion in early 2006.

The TPB's official long-range plan—called the Constrained Long-Range Plan or CLRP—reflects a relatively conservative assessment of the future. In accordance with federal law, the CLRP is based on anticipated land use patterns

(the "Cooperative Forecasts") and is constrained by anticipated funding, which is not expected to be abundant in the long- or short-term.

In contrast, the Regional Mobility and Accessibility study is designed to be a relatively unconstrained look at alternative futures for the region. In other words, the study is not supposed to be limited or constrained by questions about the difficulty of implementing the bold alternative visions.

"We're looking at 'what if's' not 'how to's'," said TPB staffer John Swanson, who presented the overview of the study at the CAC's outreach meetings.

To provide a background for the study, the CAC's public meetings began with a non-technical overview of transportation and land use challenges facing the region. A major goal of the meetings is to spark discussion about how the various scenarios might begin to address these challenges.

Many of the key issues underlying the study resonated with meeting participants. In particular, the jobs/housing imbalance and the

Future study phases will layer different packages of transportation improvements onto land use scenarios.

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
TIP	-	Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	-	Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	-	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	-	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

need for higher densities around transit were two topics that elicited extensive discussion.

Participants were especially interested in how the proposed land use changes might look at a neighborhood scale. They asked for illustrations of higher density developments in activity centers and for more focused analysis of the scenarios' effects on specific locations such as Tyson's Corner.

Participants also were interested in how the study will be used. For example, how will it feed into the TPB's official planning process?

Based on the feedback at the December outreach meetings, TPB staff and the CAC will further refine the presentation. Additional CAC outreach meetings will be scheduled at the beginning of this year. After the series of meetings is completed, the CAC will develop a report for the TPB reflecting all of the feedback received.

To see the presentation used at the public meetings, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation. See "Looking at 'What If' Scenarios" under "What's Happening in Transportation." ■

Mendelson Elected 2005 TPB Chair

District of Columbia Councilmember Phil Mendelson was elected 2005 chair of the Transportation Planning Board on December 15.

For the position of first vice chair, the TPB elected Michael Knapp of the Montgomery County Council. Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Supervisor, was elected second vice chair. According to the TPB bylaws, the three TPB officers are from D.C., Maryland and Virginia. The chairmanship rotates every year among these three jurisdictions.

Phil Mendelson has been an at-large member of the D.C. Council and a member of the TPB since 1998. He has been active in District politics since 1975, serving as a neighborhood activist and later as a staff member for the D.C. Council. As a councilmember, he has been active in a variety of issues, including education, public safety and the environment.

Mr. Mendelson is a familiar face at the Council of Governments, having served as TPB

chair in 2002, chair of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee in 2001 and 2003, and chair of the Council of Governments board in 2004.

First Vice Chair Michael Knapp was elected to the Montgomery County Council in 2002 to represent upcounty and western areas of the county. For five years in the early 1990s, he served on the staff of Senator Pete Domenici, focusing on biotechnology including the Human Genome Project. More recently he has held positions in several biotechnology companies. On the council, he is active in homeland security, education and public safety, among other issues.

Second Vice Chair Catherine Hudgins was first elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1999. She represents the Hunter Mill District in the northwestern portion of the county. From 1995 to 1999, she served as chief aide to Kate Hanley, the former chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Prior to that she held various positions as a teacher and in the computer and telecommunications industries. On the County Board of Supervisors, she is active in human services, housing and community development, information technologies and transportation. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). ■

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Census Data Reinforces 'Bus Dependency' of Low-Income & Minority Populations

Transportation planners have long known that low-income and minority communities use transit more frequently than the general population, especially bus service. Data presented to the TPB at the December meeting underscores this common knowledge and the importance of maintaining and improving bus service in the Washington region. The TPB Access for All Advisory Committee has continued to recommend and advocate for bus services, especially in light of current budget concerns and planned new rail projects.

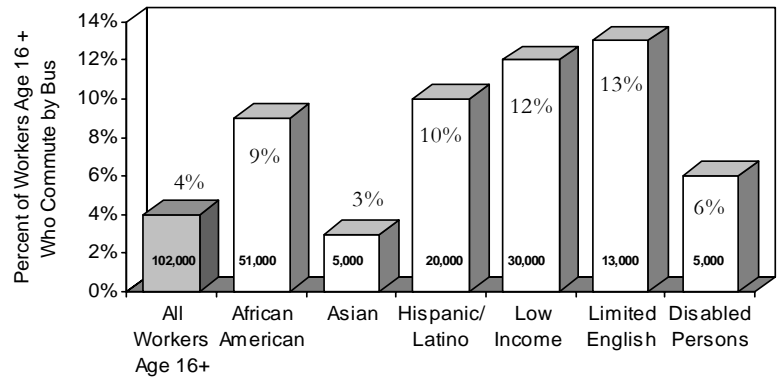
To document the travel characteristics of minority and disadvantaged population groups in the Washington region, TPB staff analyzed data from the 2000 Census. According to the Census, the largest minority group in the region is African American, representing 27 percent of the population. Asians and Hispanics represent 7 and 9 percent of the population, respectively. Disadvantaged population groups include low income individuals (17 percent) limited English speakers (5 percent), and individuals with physical or sensory disabilities (8 percent).



Reliable, accessible bus service is vital for disabled, low-income and minority communities.

Census data on commuting patterns indicates that, with the exception of the Asian population, all minority and disadvantaged workers are more likely to commute by bus compared to the general population. Whereas 4 percent of the general population travels to work by bus, 10 percent or more of Hispanic, low income and limited-

Who is Commuting to Work by Bus?



English-speaking workers use this mode.

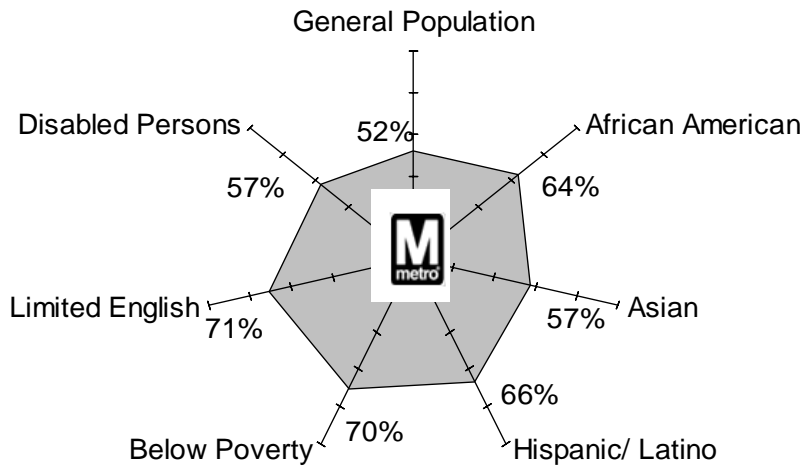
Metro rail tends to be somewhat less utilized by minority and disadvantaged population groups, compared to the general population. Only African Americans are more likely to commute by Metro rail than the general population, at 9 percent compared to 7 percent. Limited-English-speaking workers are the least likely to use Metro rail, at only 3 percent.

In addition to depending more heavily on transit, minority and disadvantaged population groups are also more likely to use other alternatives to driving alone, such as carpooling, walking and biking. Nearly one quarter of Hispanic workers and one third of limited-English-speaking workers participate in car or van pools. Although non-motorized forms of transport account for less than 5 percent of commuting trips in the Washington region, low-income workers are twice as likely to walk or bicycle to work, compared to the general population.

Minority and disadvantaged population groups are also more likely to live near transit, compared to the general population. Less than half of the general population lives within a quarter mile of a bus stop, and only 10 percent lives within a half mile of a Metro rail station. In contrast, over 50 percent of the African American and low-income populations live near bus stops,

Who is Living Near Transit?

Percent of minority and disadvantaged populations living within 1/4 mile of a bus stop



and over 15 percent of these population groups live near rail stations.

Most of the employment located near transit consists of office jobs. Whereas nearly 70 percent of office employment is accessible by bus, only 40 percent of retail employment is bus accessible. This finding suggests that while minority and disadvantaged population groups may have better access to transit than the general population, these groups may have more limited access to entry-level employment

and shopping opportunities.

Similar to the rest of the country, poverty rates and unemployment rates tend to be higher for minority groups in the Washington region. The African American and disabled populations experience the highest poverty rates, at 13 percent, compared to 7 percent of the general population. All of the minority and disadvantaged population groups participate in the labor force at lower rates than the general population. Most strikingly, only one third of the disabled population participates in the labor force.

Because of the high costs associated with car ownership, bus services are vital lifelines for low-income people. In its 2003 report, the AFA called upon decision makers to

be vigilant in safeguarding services for the most vulnerable members of our community as the region grapples with funding shortfalls. The available data reinforces AFA recommendations for maintaining and enhancing bus services, providing transit information for limited-English speakers, and improving pedestrian safety and paratransit services for people with disabilities. To view the AFA recommendations, go to www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents. ■

Upcoming January Agenda

The TPB's January agenda is expected to include:

- Briefing on the final report of the regional panel to address dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).
- Approval of appointments to the 2005 Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Review of comments and approval for the 8-hour air quality conformity assessment for the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan and FY2005-2010 TIP.

- Approval of draft Solicitation Document for the 2005 CLRP and FY2006-11 TIP. The solicitation document lays out the process for submitting projects.
- Update on actions to improve regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents.
- Review of priority regional unfunded bicycle and pedestrian projects, and a report on the regional pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign.
- Review of the outline and preliminary budget for the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and for the FY2006 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP). The UPWP is the TPB's annual work program. ■

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).

January 2005

- 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)
- 13 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 14 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 18 Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- 18 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 25 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*
- 25 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 27 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

February 2005

- 1 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 4 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 10 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 11 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 16 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

March 2005

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

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