

Draft Regional Bike/Ped Plan Released

The Transportation Planning Board is scheduled in July to approve the Washington area's first comprehensive, regionwide bicycle and pedestrian plan.

At the May 17 meeting of the TPB, Michael Farrell of the TPB staff presented the draft plan. The release of a final draft for public comment is scheduled for mid-June. The plan will then be submitted for TPB approval at the July 19 meeting.

In addition to a list of more than 500 projects, the draft document presents the policy context for bicycle and pedestrian planning, including a description of relevant federal and state policies and initiatives along with summaries of local plans and past regional efforts.

The current draft is the first to consider multi-use trail, bicycle-specific and pedestrian improvements together in the same plan. However, the plan is based upon nearly 30 years of bicycle and pedestrian planning at the TPB. Following the completion of a major bicycle study in 1977 and subsequent updates, the TPB first incorporated a "Bicycle Element" in the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) in 1991. In 2001, the TPB issued the *Priorities 2000: Greenways and Circulation Systems* reports, which included both greenway and pedestrian



The draft bike/ped plan would add 482 new miles of shared use trails and paths.

circulation priorities beyond those listed in the revenue-limited CLRP.

The completion of the plan represents the TPB's continuing commitment to inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in the long-range planning process. Project identification was based on past TPB efforts including the *Priorities 2000* reports, local agency plans, and an analysis of the connectivity needs of the regional bike/ped system. Beyond



The plan includes 247 new miles of bike lanes.

See **Bike/Ped Plan** on page 2

Region's Hybrid Ownership is Double National Average

The number of hybrid vehicles per household in the Washington region is almost twice the national average, according to new findings presented at the May 17 TPB meeting.

Departments of Motor Vehicles in each state record the unique vehicle identification number (VIN) of each vehicle registered in the state, and TPB staff obtained this information from each area jurisdiction in July 2005. New software enabling the decoding of VINs has allowed TPB staff to compile data about the age and model of vehicles and tabulate a "vehicle census" for the region.

See **Hybrid Ownership** on page 3

Bike/Ped Plan

continued from page 1

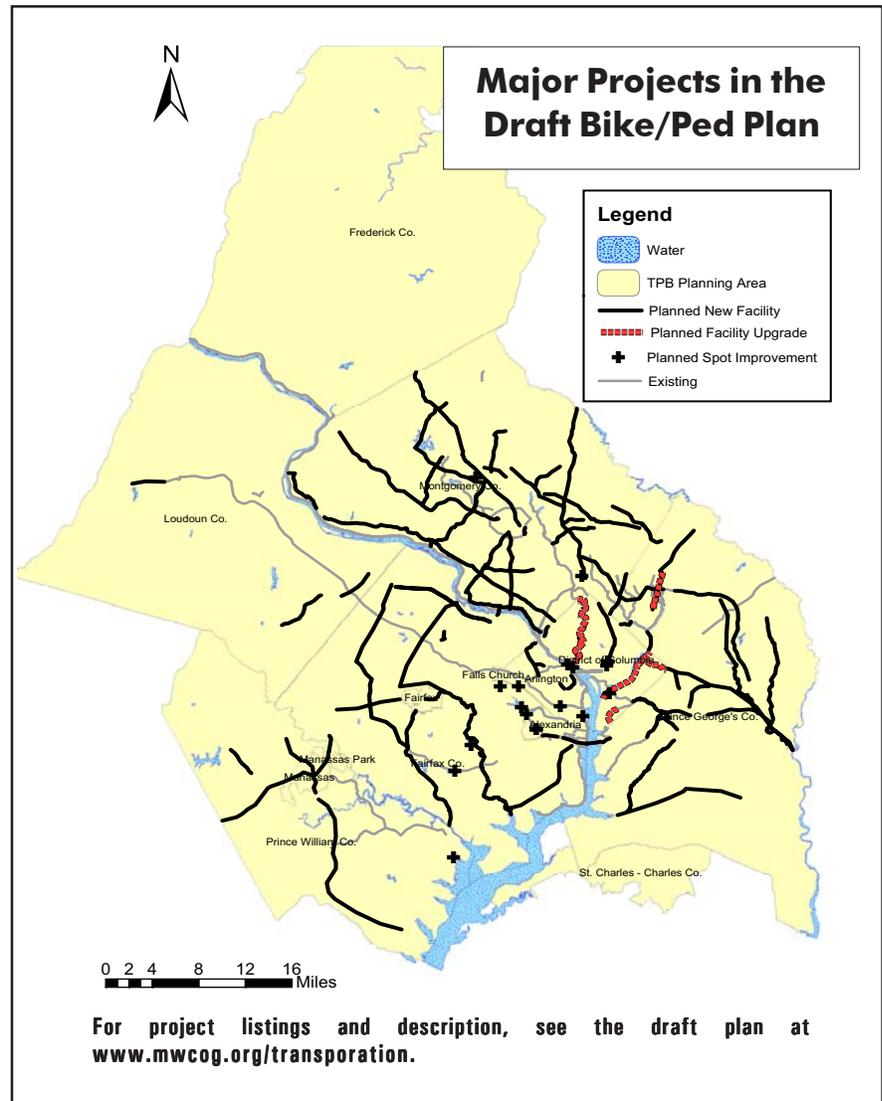
their inclusion in the plan, projects are not further prioritized, though the possibility remains for that to be done in the future.

The draft plan also summarizes the current state of bicycling and walking in the region, with statistics capturing the share of work trips by these modes and the demographic characteristics of the workers who use them. The mode shares in the Washington region are similar to national averages, with 3.1 percent walking to work and 0.3 percent biking (compared to national averages of 2.93 percent and 0.38 percent respectively). Also similar to the national picture is the decline of both shares in the area since 1990.

Despite the overall percentage decline, however, the amount of bicycle traffic entering the downtown Metro core is growing rapidly. In addition, the draft plan notes that bicycling and walking are more common for non-work trips, and that walking trips can be underrepresented in Census data when combined with transit use since such a commute would be listed only as a transit commute.

The draft also points out that between 1994 and 2004, 24 percent of all traffic fatalities in the region were bicyclists or pedestrians.

If every project identified in the plan is implemented, the region's bicycle and pedestrian system would grow by 247 miles of bicycle lanes and 482 miles of multi-use paths by 2030, along with numerous sidewalk and intersection improvements and other measures to improve conditions for pedestrians. The plan estimates the total cost of the nearly 500 facility improvement projects identified to be about \$500 million (2006 dollars). Approximately 20 percent of the facility cost estimates were



provided by sponsoring agencies while the remaining 80 percent were based on a cost-per-mile estimate for various facility types.

The plan also includes a "best practices" section with a set of recommendations for regional progress in meeting bicycle and pedestrian needs and encouraging growth in the shares of these travel modes.

Following approval by the TPB, the draft plan is expected to serve not only as a policy basis for understanding the regional significance of bicycle and pedestrian projects, but also as guidance in implementing facility improvements and for future inclusion of identified projects in the CLRP. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will complement other TPB initiatives dealing with bicycling and walking, including regional education, facility mapping and commuter aid programs. ■

Hybrid Ownership *continued from page 1*

“This data set is the most accurate picture of the region’s vehicle fleet that we have ever had,” said Ron Kirby, COG Transportation Planning Director. “This is essentially a vehicle census because we now know just how many vehicles there are, how old they are, how big they are, and where they are located. The data will be very valuable for future transportation and air quality planning.”

The primary purpose for obtaining the data is for use by TPB staff in accurately forecasting vehicle emissions. But possessing a comprehensive dataset describing the region’s vehicle fleet also allows for some interesting observations and comparisons between different parts of the region, especially when it comes to rates of hybrid ownership.

The data show for the first time the effect that HOV privileges may have had in Northern Virginia, which leads both Maryland and D.C. significantly in hybrid ownership. At almost 15 hybrids per 1,000 households, Prince William County, Virginia, leads the region in hybrid ownership with well over four times the national average. This trend toward hybrids is clear even when taking into account the larger number of all types of vehicles per household in the outer suburbs of the region.

Northern Virginia jurisdictions average 10.73 hybrids per 1,000 households compared to 3.66 in D.C., 3.25 in Suburban Maryland and a national average of 3.31. Residents of Loudoun and Prince William Counties, where hybrid vehicle rates are highest, likely are able to derive the most benefit from HOV privileges in commuting toward the core of the region on Interstates 66 and 95.

The number of vehicles in the region, from passenger cars to SUVs to buses, totals more than 3.3 million or 1.8 vehicles per household. About 60 percent are passenger vehicles (i.e., sedans, station wagons), 35 percent are light trucks (SUVs, pickup trucks), and 5 percent are heavy trucks and buses.

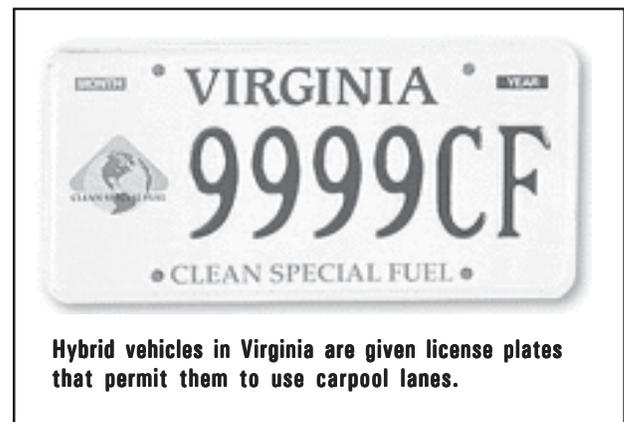
Kirby told the TPB that the “vehicle census” data would be updated every three years in concert with the air quality analysis cycle. Several TPB members expressed interest in getting such information more frequently and

that it would be useful in guiding policy discussions.

TPB Vice Chair Catherine Hudgins said, “I think that there are some decision points that are going to be occurring, policy-wise, regarding HOV lanes, and all of this information feeds in to helping us make the right decisions on questions that may arise.”

More key findings:

- The share of the vehicle fleet made up of SUVs and light or heavy-duty trucks increases moving out from the Regional Core (D.C., Arlington and Alexandria), where 30 percent of the fleet consists of such vehicles. That



share is 39 percent in the inner suburbs (Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties) and 49 percent in the outer suburbs (Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Loudoun and Prince William Counties).

- There is an average of 1.24 vehicles per household in the Regional Core, an average of 1.89 vehicles per household in the inner suburbs and an average of 2.27 vehicles per household in the outer suburbs.

For additional data, graphs, and the full PowerPoint presentation given at the May 17 TPB meeting, visit www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/meetings. ■

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Community Leadership Institute



Participants from the TPB's first Community Leadership Institute spoke at the TPB meeting on May 17 and were presented with certificates. Pictured, left to right, are Tuva K. Welp, William Shelton, TPB Vice Chair Catherine Hudgins, Mel Franklin and Suresh Narasimhan.

Other May Agenda Items

The TPB May agenda included the following items not described elsewhere in *TPB News*:

- **Report on the TPB Community Leadership Institute.** The Board was briefed on a pilot set of workshops to educate community leaders on how, where and when transportation decisions are made and how to connect their interests with the regional planning issues.
- **Approval of amendments to the FY 2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to modify funding for 15 highway projects in Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.** These amendments were requested by the Maryland Department of Transportation to reflect funding changes authorized under last year's federal surface transportation reauthorization legislation. The amendments do not affect the TIP's standing air quality conformity determination.

During the consideration of these amendments, TPB Member Andrew Fellows offered an amendment to remove Maryland's Intercounty Connector from the TIP. The TPB did not accept that amendment. ■

TPB June Agenda

The TPB June 21 agenda will include the following items:

- Approval of amendments to the FY 2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to *fund rapid bus transit on Georgia and Pennsylvania avenues and to reconstruct portions of 18th Street NW in the Adams Morgan neighborhood.* These amendments were requested by the District Department of Transportation.
- Status report on the *Regional Transportation Coordination Program.* Last October, the Board amended the Transportation Improvement Program to include funding of \$400,000 per year for five years to initiate a regional transportation coordination program. The Board will be briefed on recent steps to implement the program.
- Update on *transportation-land use incentive programs.* In April, the Board was briefed on four transportation-land use incentive programs currently underway in other metropolitan areas. The Board will be briefed on experience to date with these incentive programs, and on alternative approaches for strengthening the linkages between transportation and land use planning in the Washington region.
- Briefing on *proposed TPB human service transportation planning and designated recipient roles.* Last year's federal surface transportation reauthorization legislation requires that a Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan be prepared for the region. The Board will be briefed on the development of this new coordination plan by the TPB, and on the designation of a recipient to administer certain Federal Transit Administration programs.
- Update on *air quality planning activities.*
- Report on the *draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* for the National Capital Region. See article on pages 1-2.
- Status report on the *draft financial analysis* for the 2006 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). ■

Ad Hoc Committee Identifies Structural Problems With Regional Paratransit

A preliminary report by WMATA's Ad Hoc MetroAccess Advisory Committee calls for numerous improvements to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's paratransit service, and concludes that many of the problems plaguing the service are structural in nature.

As chair of the ad hoc committee's Best Practices Working Group, TPB staff member Wendy Klancher summarized the group's recommendations at the May 17 TPB meeting. The meeting also featured impassioned comments from two members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, who asked TPB members to continue their efforts to address the concerns of Metro users with disabilities.

Also at the May TPB meeting, a staff person for U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen read a letter on behalf of the Congressman praising the TPB and WMATA for addressing problems with MetroAccess.

"I remain deeply concerned that MetroAccess is not yet operating as well as it should," read Van Hollen's statement, which called the advisory committee's preliminary recommendations "a good start to help alleviate some of the problems which still exist."

The recommendations by the Best Practices Working Group include improvements to customer service and communication, ensuring adequate, experienced and stable staffing, utilizing new scheduling and software strategies, and strengthening contract oversight and monitoring. The recommendations stem from research by the working group into practices of paratransit services in other metropolitan areas.

In particular, the working group observes that in most major metropolitan areas multiple contractors are enlisted for administration and execution of paratransit service, rather than relying upon a single contractor as does WMATA. Although the contractor becomes the focal point of criticism when service lapses occur, the working group asserts that better

oversight and management of the contract by WMATA is central to improving service.

WMATA formed the MetroAccess Ad Hoc Advisory Committee in February in response to public criticism about service lapses following a change in paratransit contractors. The TPB Access for All Committee had also highlighted service deficiencies in its report entitled "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region." The TPB was briefed on this report at its February meeting, and approved transmitting the report to the WMATA Board of Directors. The report in turn served as a starting point for the WMATA ad hoc committee in identifying the issues that needed to be addressed.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee plans to present a final set of findings and recommendations to the WMATA Board of Directors in June. ■



Demand-responsive services, also called paratransit, are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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

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 2006

- 2 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 2 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 6 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 13 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 15 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 20 Commuter Connections Center Subcommittee (10 am)
- 20 Transportation Management Association (TMA) Advisory Group (noon)
- 21 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 27 Travel Management Subcommittee

July 2006

- 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 Committee (10 am)
- 18 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 18 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 27 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

August 2006

No meetings scheduled

September 2006

- 8 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 8 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 12 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 13 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 14 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 19 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 19 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 19 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 19 Commuter Connection Ridematching Committee (2 pm)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 26 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- 28 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 28 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

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