

Commuter Connections Programs Streamlined

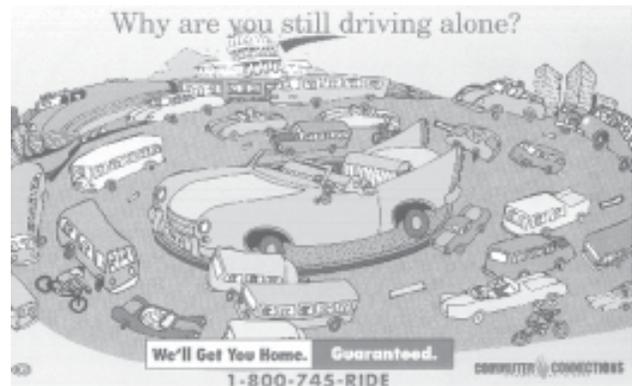
Commuter Connections, the region's commuter assistance program, has been restructured to better serve clients and ensure easier management and oversight.

At its June 15 meeting, the TPB approved the fiscal year 2006 Commuter Connections Work Program, which includes regional activities plus a number of programs that will be conducted at the discretion of individual states.

Commuter Connections provides a variety of services that encourage people to cut back on the habit of driving alone to work. Since its inception in 1974 as the "Commuter Club," the various programs and services of Commuter Connections have evolved and expanded. The restructured work program will streamline the management and oversight for the different activities, which have developed incrementally over the years.

The key elements of the new Commuter Connections work program include the following:

- The *Commuter Operations Center* provides ridematching services to commuters through a central toll free number "1-800-745-RIDE";
- *Guaranteed Ride Home* provides users of alternative commute modes up to four free rides home per year in a taxi or rental car in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime;
- *Marketing* of alternative commute options provides continual regional marketing of car/vanpooling, teleworking, mass transit, Bike to Work Day, and Guaranteed Ride Home aimed at persuading commuters to switch to



Commuter Connections started with a ride-matching service in 1974 and has since expanded into a number of programs and services that encourage commuters to cut back on solo driving.

2004 Air Quality Finding Gets Federal OK

The air quality finding for the TPB's most recently adopted long-range plan amendments has received federal approval.

On June 14, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sent a letter to TPB Chair Phil Mendelson stating that the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the FY2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are in conformity with the emissions goals laid out in the region's air quality improvement plan.

This federal finding represents an approval of the TPB's air quality analysis conducted for

Commuter Connections

continued from page 1

alternative commute modes from the use of single-occupant vehicles, as well as persuading commuters currently using alternative commute modes to continue to use those modes.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation** provides data collection and analysis as well as program tracking and monitoring reports for each program area.
- **Employer Outreach** supports marketing and outreach efforts to the region's employers to encourage use by their employees of alternative commute modes such as ridesharing, transit, telecommuting, bicycling, and walking; assists employers in holding bicycling seminars for employees, and maintains an up-to-date regional Bicycling Guide.
- **Telework** provides information and resources to employers on the benefits of teleworking and assists them in setting up telework programs for their employees;
- **InfoExpress Kiosks** are located at selected shopping centers and other high pedestrian activity areas and provide commuting information to the general public.

Because of Commuter Connections programs, there are approximately 110,000 fewer vehicle trips in the region every day. Vehicle miles of travel (VMT), a measure of how much the roads are being used, is reduced by nearly 2 million miles every day.

Commuter Connections programs were also shown to reduce vehicle emissions, which is the primary reason most of the different program activities were implemented in the first place. Every day, the programs are estimated to reduce nitrogen oxides (NOx) by 2.3 tons and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 1.22 tons.

These measures of effectiveness have shown that Commuter Connections is among the most effective commuter assistance programs in the nation in terms of reducing solo driving and vehicle emissions.

For more information on the Commuter Connections work program, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see Item 7 under the June 15 TPB meeting. ■

Special Work Session on the **CapCom Regional Transportation Coordination Program**

Wednesday, July 20, 2005, 10:30 - 11:45 am
COG Board Room
777 N Capitol St NE, Washington, DC 20002

CapCom is proposed as a program responsible for regional-scale information gathering, exchange, and dissemination for the transportation sector both during major incidents and in everyday traffic situations. This session is open to interested participants. We welcome your participation.

Also on the June Agenda

Other items on the TPB's June agenda included:

- Briefing on the transportation conformity rule amendments for the *new PM2.5 national ambient air quality standard*, and release for public comment of the draft scope of work for conducting the PM2.5 conformity analysis for the 2005 CLRP and FY2006-2011 TIP. New federal rules require metropolitan planning organizations like the TPB to show their transportation plans will conform to regional goals for reducing fine particulate matter, known as PM2.5. A scope of work for conducting this analysis has been released for public comment.
- Briefing and approval of a work program to analyze the transportation and air quality impacts of the *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's proposal* to move Department of Defense jobs within the Washington region. The board approved the work plan for this analysis. Results will be presented in July.
- Briefing on activities to evaluate the impacts of the *Round 7.0 Cooperative Land Use Forecasts*. The board discussed efforts to address a projected job/housing imbalance in the land use forecasts. Revisions to the forecasts will be discussed at the July TPB meeting. ■

This newsletter is produced by John Swanson
MWCog, 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

July Agenda

The TPB's July agenda will include:

- *Approval of the scope of work for conducting the fine particles (PM2.5) conformity analysis for the 2005 CLRP and the 2006-2011 TIP.* PM2.5 conformity is a new federal requirement.
- *Report on the 16th Annual Public Transit Forum.* Each year, the TPB Private Providers Task Force sponsors an annual forum where public transit staff from WMATA and state and local jurisdictions meet with interested private providers to discuss plans for new or restructured transit services in the region. This year's forum was held on May 24.
- *Briefing on the transportation and air quality impacts of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's proposal to move Department of Defense jobs within the Washington region.* The TPB will be briefed on the staff analysis of the transportation and air quality impacts of the BRAC recommendations.
- *Report on the revisions to the draft Round 7.0 Cooperative Land Use Forecasts for use in the air quality conformity analysis for the 2005 CLRP and FY2006-2011 TIP.* The Cooperative Land Use Forecasts have been revised to address an imbalance in an early draft set of forecasts in which future job growth would have significantly outpaced the growth in housing.
- *Briefing on the Report: Travel Characteristics and Accessibility Impacts of the 2004 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) on Minority, Low-Income, and Disabled Populations in the Washington Region.*
- *Briefing on consultant support for public involvement for the 2006 Update to the CLRP.* TPB staff is proposing to use consultant support to help conduct outreach activities this fall.
- *Briefing on recent Congressional actions to reauthorize the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).* Congress is in the final stages of reauthorizing the six-year surface transportation act. ■

Air Quality *continued from page 1*

last year's CLRP and TIP. Any time the CLRP or TIP are updated or amended, the TPB must conduct an air quality analysis and approve a finding that vehicle emissions associated with the plan will not exceed regional air quality goals. This finding is called a conformity determination.

The TPB approved the most recent conformity determination on November 17, 2004. That approval accompanied approval of the 2004 CLRP and FY2005-2010 TIP.

The most notable new project in last year's CLRP was Maryland's Intercounty Connector (ICC), an 18-mile proposed road between Gaithersburg and Laurel, Maryland.

An environmental group, Earth Justice, raised objections in January that the CLRP did not meet the requirement that metropolitan long-range transportation plans must be fiscally constrained consistent with federal metropolitan planning regulations. However, the federal agencies in their approval of the TPB's conformity determination on June 14 found that federal laws and regulations for metropolitan transportation planning had been met, including financial constraint requirements. ■

TPB Alphabet Soup

BRAC	- Base Realignment and Closure Commission
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
MDPC	- Metropolitan Development Policy Committee
MWAQC	- Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
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).

July 2005

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

August 2005

- 2 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)

September 2005

- 9 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 9 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 9 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 13 Commuter Operations Center Subcommittee (10 am)
- 13 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 13 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (1:30 pm)
- 15 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 16 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 20 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 21 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 23 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 27 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*
- 29 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

October 2005

- 4 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 5 Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (noon)
- 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 (1:30 pm)
- 13 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 14 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 20 Guaranteed Ride Home Ad-Hoc Group (noon)
- 20 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evaluation Group (noon)

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