

Long-Range Plan Amendments, Including ICC, Scheduled for Vote on November 17

Maryland's Intercountry Connector (ICC) will face a crucial vote on November 17 as the Transportation Planning Board decides whether to include the project in regional plans. The ICC is among 10 major projects that the TPB will consider for this year's amendments to the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRTP) and the fiscal year 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**CLRTP/TIP
2004**

In order to receive federal funding, the ICC, like all regionally significant projects, must be included in the long-range plan and the TIP. The TIP is essentially a detailed six-year subset of the CLRTP, which covers the years 2004-2030.

The ICC, which is the only major new facility proposed for the plan, has dominated this year's CLRTP amendment process. Earlier this year, the project survived a divided vote in April when opponents tried to prevent it from being included in the air quality analysis that is

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Disability Awareness: Getting to Work

Members of the Transportation Planning Board joined people with disabilities and members of the media on October 20 to raise awareness about the important role accessible transportation plays in getting people with disabilities to work.

To highlight the typical workday commute of people with disabilities, 11 travel teams—each including a person with a disability, a regional transportation leader from the TPB and a member of the media—trekked to a press conference held at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) headquarters near Union Station. The TPB's Access for All

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"We are not doing this for us, but for you," said Dr. Bud Keith at the Access for All press conference on October 20. "As you age, you might need a wheelchair. Your vision could get worse." Pictured standing behind Dr. Keith are Maryland Delegate Carol Petzold and Montgomery County Councilmember Michael Knapp. Seated are Connie Caldwell, left, and Cindy Buddington, right. TPB Chairman Chris Zimmerman, standing left, moderated the press conference.

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required before projects can be added to the CLRP.

The ICC would run 18 miles between I-270 near Gaithersburg and I-95/US 1 near Laurel, Maryland. Supporters claim it will reduce congestion and promote economic development. Critics charge it will exacerbate sprawl, soak up scarce transportation revenues and worsen east-west economic disparities in the region.

Air quality conformity is TPB prerequisite

Before the CLRP and TIP can be approved on November 17, the TPB must approve an air quality "conformity determination" showing that forecasted emissions will "conform" to limits (called "mobile emissions budgets") established in the region's air quality improvement plan.

The TPB on October 1 released a draft air quality conformity analysis showing that emissions forecasted for the amended CLRP would fall under the mobile emissions budgets. The comment period for the conformity analysis, along with the draft CLRP and TIP, ended on October 31.

During the comment period, the TPB received nearly 1,200 comments. Almost 500 comments were in support of the proposed CLRP amendments, including the ICC, while nearly 650 were in opposition. These comments can be viewed at www.mwvog.org.

Funding plan, funding concerns

In addition to air quality conformity, federal law requires the TPB's long-range plan to be financially constrained. The plan may only include projects with funding that "is reasonably anticipated to be available."

This newsletter is produced by John Swanson
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239
202-962-3295; jswanson@mwvog.org
"TPB News" at www.mwvog.org/transportation

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) submitted a funding plan for the ICC when the project was proposed in February of this year for inclusion in the CLRP and TIP. The road carries an anticipated pricetag of \$1.7 billion. In addition to revenues from tolls and other traditional sources, the project's funding plan includes Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE) bonds, which are repaid through future federal-aid transportation funding.

Opponents worry that the project will use up so much funding that other important projects will be put on hold indefinitely.

MDOT has responded that the GARVEE bond debt financing will amount to approximately 10-15 percent of MDOT's annual federal apportionment, and will have a minimal impact on future funding opportunities.

In order to receive federal funding, the ICC, like all projects, must be included in the region's Constrained Long-Range Plan.

Project reborn in 2002

The ICC is a portion of an outer beltway that was proposed in the 1950s by the National Capital Planning Commission. In 1968, Montgomery County dropped the outer beltway from its land use plans, but retained the ICC link between I-270 and I-95/US 1. The project has remained in the Montgomery County Master Plan.

In 1983 and 1997, the Maryland State Highway Administration issued Draft Environmental Impact Statements for the project and held public hearings as part of the federal required study process. But no final decisions were reached. Former Governor Parris Glendenning halted the ICC study in 1999 citing environmental concerns.

The project was given new life in 2002 with the election of Governor Robert Ehrlich.

"Since Day One of the Ehrlich administration, we have been focused on restarting the Intercounty Connector," the

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CLRP 2004 Draft Amendments

Ten projects were submitted for the 2004 amendments to the CLRP and the FY2005-10 TIP.

1. The Intercounty Connector.

Construct a new east-west, multi-modal highway in Montgomery and Prince George's counties between I-270 and I-95/US 1. The project will include managed lanes with express bus service connecting to Metrorail. The conformity analysis included each of the two submitted alignments of the six-lane facility. The completion date is 2010. The 2003 CLRP included the project as a study only.

2. Add auxiliary lane to reconstruction of MD 202.
Change completion date from 2005 to 2015.

3. Remove HOV lanes in reconstruction of MD 4.

4. Change completion date from 2003 to 2010 for widening of Father Hurley/Ridge Rd from I-270 to MD27.

5. Add eastbound auxiliary lane to widening of I-66 from US 29 to VA 234.

6. Change project limits for widening US 50 in Virginia. Add a segment from Loudoun/Fairfax County line to VA 659 relocated. Completion date for project changed from 2020 to 2012.

7. Change project limits for widening VA 123: Add a segment from Hooes Rd to Lee Chapel Rd. Completion remains 2015.

8. Change project limits for widening VA 234: Add a segment from Country Club Dr to Waterway Dr. Completion date remains 2006.

9. Modify the Fairfax County Parkway to convert the existing 5th and 6th lanes to HOV from Sunrise Valley Dr to the Dulles Toll Rd. Completion date is 2015.

10. Add an additional lane in each direction to the construction project for the Battlefield Parkway from Kincaid Blvd to VA 7. Completion date for project changed from 2006 to 2009.



Plan Amendments

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governor wrote in a statement on the MDOT website.

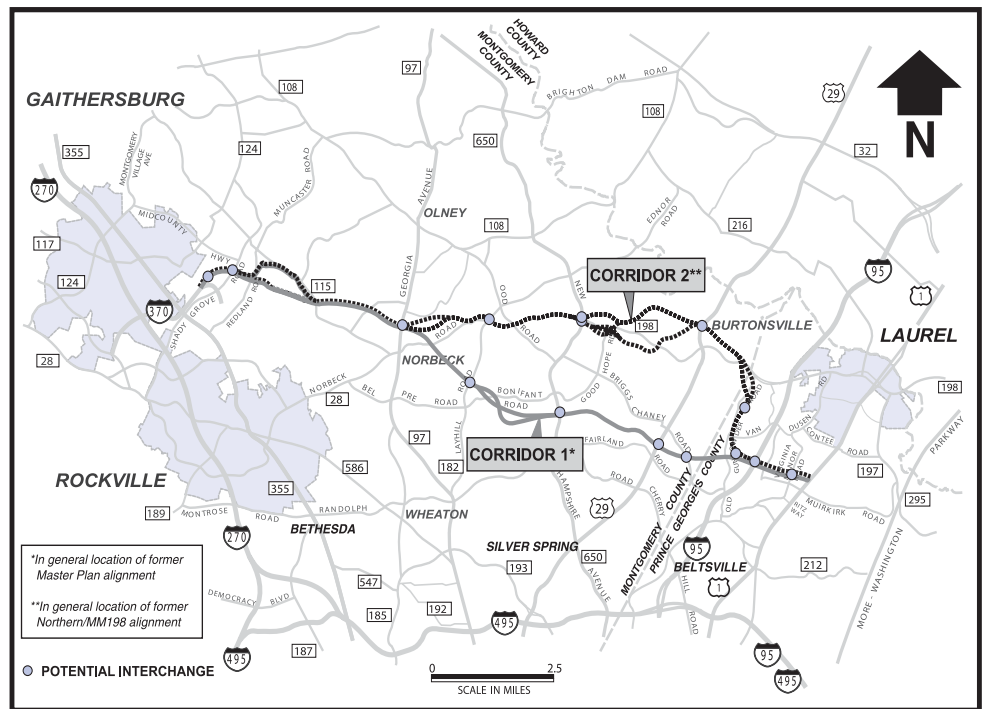
Governor Ehrlich hopes to break ground on the project before the end of his term in 2006. MDOT has said that including the road in the CLRP this year is key to keeping the project on schedule.

The ICC is on an "environmental streamlining" list of 13 projects receiving accelerated environmental reviews under an executive order signed by President Bush in 2002.

In late November or early December, MDOT intends to release a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project. Public hearings

on the DEIS are likely to be held in January.

For more information on the CLRP and TIP, see www.mwco.org/transportation. ■



Two potential alignments for the Intercounty Connector, shown above, were analyzed in the regional air quality conformity analysis.

Maryland State Highway Administration

Upcoming November Agenda

The TPB's November 17 agenda will include:

- Approval of the 2004 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), the FY 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and associated air quality conformity determination. *The TPB will review staff responses to comments received on the CLRP, TIP and conformity determination.*
- Certification of the Urban Transportation Planning Process for the National Capital Region. *Federal regulations require this annual certification.*
- Approval of a TPB letter of support for the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) study of the relocation of the CSX rail line within the District of Columbia.

- Endorsement of actions to improve regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents.
- Approval of amendments to the FY 2004-2009 TIP and the draft FY2005-2010 TIP to include funding for Metrorail and Metrobus rehabilitation and maintenance projects and rail and bus fleet expansions and associated facilities upgrades. *WMATA has requested that the TIP be amended to include recently committed funding. These amendments are exempt from air quality conformity requirements.*
- Approval of a resolution declaring funding must be identified to meet preservation, rehabilitation, and capacity expansion needs of the region's highways, local transit, and commuter rail system. *Last month, the TPB approved a resolution focused on WMATA's preservation, rehabilitation and capacity expansion needs.* ■

What if... the Washington region grew differently?

A public forum on alternative land-use and transportation scenarios
Wednesday, December 8, 2004 — 7:30 -9:00 pm
Activity Center at Bohrer Park, Summit Hill Farm
506 South Frederick Ave, Gaithersburg, MD



What if people lived closer to their jobs? **What if** people lived and worked closer to transit?
What if new roads and transit were built? **How would travel conditions change?**

On the evening of December 8, citizens will have a chance to learn how different patterns of growth might affect driving, congestion, and transit use in our region. The meeting will be hosted by the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee. For more information, contact John Swanson of the COG/ TPB staff at 202-962-3295

Other October Agenda Items

Other items on the TPB's October agenda included:

- Approval of a resolution declaring that funding must be identified to meet preservation, rehabilitation and capacity expansion needs of the Metrorail and Metrobus system.
- Review of comments received and approval of 2010 project submissions and scope of work for the 8-Hour Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2004 CLRP and FY 2005-10 TIP. *Because of new air quality requirements issued by EPA (the "8-Hour Standard"), the TPB needs to conduct a new air quality conformity assessment for the same CLRP and TIP that are scheduled for approval in November. Included in this new assessment will be an analysis for 2010, which was not previously done.*
- Briefing on upgrades to the TPB travel demand model and post-processor used for the draft air quality conformity assessment for the 2004 CLRP and the FY 2005-10 TIP. ■

2005 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for membership on the 2005 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), please contact COG/TPB staff by the end of November. The TPB's public involvement process encourages candidates who "represent environmental, business and civic interests in transportation, including appropriate representation from low-income, minority and disabled groups and from the geographic area covered by the TPB." Interested candidates should send a brief statement to John Swanson, COG/ TPB staff, at jswanson@mwkog.org. For more information, call 202/962-3295.

Disability Awareness

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(AFA) advisory committee sponsored the event, Disability Awareness Day, which focused on pedestrian, bus, rail and para-transit access.

An Eye-Opening Experience

At the press conference, travel team members shared details of their commute, highlighting accessibility features and challenges encountered along the way. For many of the TPB members, the trip was an eye-opener. "I have traveled back and forth to COG for many years and I would have said yesterday that coming out of the Metro station was an absolutely flat trip along the sidewalk," said Carol Petzold, a Maryland House Delegate who traveled with Connie Caldwell from Montgomery County's Commission of People with Disabilities.

"Today with Connie and her manually operated wheelchair I realized there is a significant slope to the sidewalk," Petzold continued. "Something that had never mattered to me was a significant safety feature for us today."

Additional challenges encountered by the travel teams included elevator outages, narrow sidewalks crowded with people and poorly placed objects such as fire hydrants and parking meters, poorly placed or missing curb ramps, and confusion and delays associated with para-transit services.

Travel team participants also had praise for the progress the region has made towards accessible transportation since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act 14 years ago, such as the installation of wheelchair lifts on over 90 percent of the region's buses. Michelle Pourciau, Deputy Director of the DC Department of Transportation, was pleasantly surprised by how smoothly her bus trip with District resident and wheelchair-user Robert Kairy went. "I know we have a long way to go before trips like we had this morning are the rule rather than the exception," she said.

"The region needs to work together to create a transit and pedestrian system that provides access for all," said Takoma Park Mayor Kathy Porter, who is chair of the AFA and commuted



Kathy Porter, chair of the Access for All Advisory Committee, listed a number of practical improvements that could improve accessibility.

to the conference with Phillip Strong of the American Council for the Blind on a Ride-On bus and then Metrorail. She noted the helpful audible crossing signals in Silver Spring's newly-developed downtown, but also said the region needs to work on getting bumpy warning strips on all Metrorail platforms, making sure all buses are lift-equipped and improving pedestrian access, especially at busy intersections.

Reliable Transportation for Reliable Employees

Transportation is a major barrier for people with disabilities in gaining employment. According to a 2004 National Organization on Disability (NOD)/Harris national survey, persons with disabilities are twice as likely to have inadequate transportation as persons without disabilities. In the Washington region, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is also twice that of the general population.

"Reliable and dependable employees need reliable and dependable transportation," John Hudson, an AFA member and Program Manager for Disability Services in Fairfax County, said at the press conference. Hudson, an electric wheelchair user, commuted to the conference with Fairfax Supervisor Linda Smyth on MetroAccess.

"The Washington region has a complex, multi-jurisdictional and multi-modal transportation system," said TPB Chair

Christopher Zimmerman, who moderated the press conference and commuted with Arlington resident and AFA member Dr. Bud Keith. "Much has been done to improve access to the region's transit system and pedestrian environment for people with disabilities, but there is still more to do," Zimmerman said.

Benefits for All

Dr. Keith added, "We are not doing this for us, but for you. As you age, you might need a wheelchair. Your vision could get worse." The retired federal employee with a visual impairment who has been working for better transportation access for people with disabilities for about 35 years told participants that improved pedestrian and transit access will benefit all of society.



"Reliable and dependable employees need reliable and dependable transportation," said John Hudson of Fairfax County. Seated at right is Phillip Strong, American Council for the Blind.

Robert "Bobby" Coward, local activist for people with disabilities and president of DC Adapt, mentioned how Metro is addressing some of the needs of people with disabilities. But he also pointed out day-to-day accessibility issues such as elevator outages in the Metrorail system, elevator buttons that are inaccessible, and the gap between rail cars and the platform.

At the TPB's October meeting, which followed the press conference, members voted to support a resolution recognizing "the importance of accessible and dependable transit service, sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings for people with disabilities." The AFA is recommending that a comprehensive study of the curb-to-curb service be conducted for the best and most cost-effective ways to serve the greatest number of people. AFA will continue to work for improved Metrorail and bus reliability and coordinate accessibility efforts with regional and local transit providers. ■

Disability Awareness Day

October 20, 2004

Travel Teams: Participants and Routes

- **Team 1**

Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
John Hudson, Fairfax County Director of Disability Services
Travel Route: MetroAccess to COG from Fairfax County Government Center

- **Team 2**

Cathy Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Michael LaJuene, TPB Citizens Advisory Committee, Fairfax County
Travel Route: Fairfax Connector Bus to Orange Line, Transfer to Red line (Shuttle bus from Federal Triangle because of Metro Center elevator outages) Red line to Union Station, walk/wheel to COG

- **Team 3**

Chris Zimmerman, TPB Chair, Arlington County Board
Bud Keith from Arlington County
Travel Route: STAR Trip (Arlington County's paratransit) from County Board office to COG

- **Team 4**

Kathy Porter, TPB AFA Committee Chair, Mayor of Takoma Park
Phillip Strong, American Council for the Blind, Montgomery County
Travel Route: Walk to Silver Spring Metro, Ride-on Bus to Takoma Park Metro, Red Line to Union Station, walk to COG

- **Team 5**

Carol Petzold, Delegate, Maryland House
Connie Caldwell, Montgomery County's Commission of People with Disabilities
Travel Route: Wheaton Metro to Union Station, Walk/Wheel to COG

- **Team 6**

Marsha Kaiser, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation
Ron Spalding, Maryland Department of Transportation
Regina Lee, Prince George's County
Gloria Swieringa, ACORN, Prince George's County
Travel Route: MARC trip from New Carrollton Union Station, Walk/Wheel to COG

- **Team 7**

Cicero Salles, Department of Public Works, Prince George's County
Jessica Lehman, ACORN, Prince George's County
Travel Route: "The Bus" #21 to New Carrollton, Orange line to Minnesota Avenue, transfer to X2, take to COG

- **Team 8**

Michael Knapp, Montgomery County Council
Cindy Buddington, Montgomery County
Travel Route: Rockville Metro —Red line to Union Station, Walk/Wheel to COG

- **Team 9**

Dan Tangherlini, Director, DC Department of Transportation
Michelle Pourciau, Deputy Director, DC Department of Transportation
Ronnie Edwards, DC Department of Transportation
Gil Williams, DC Department of Transportation
Robert Kairy, DC
Travel Route: Metrobus #96 from Reeves Center at 14th and U to COG

- **Team 10**

Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Robert "Bobby" Coward, President of DC ADAPT, DC
Travel Route: Metrobus X2 from 13th Street and H Street to COG

- **Team 11**

Richard White, CEO and General Manager of WMATA
Pat Sheehan, Chair, WMATA Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee, Montgomery County
Travel Route: McPherson Square Metro to Union Station, Walk to COG

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).

November 2004

- 3 "Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility" Class in Bethesda MD (9 am)
- 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)
- 10 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 16 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (10 am)
- 16 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 17 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 18 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 19 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 23 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)

December 2004

- 3 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 3 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 7 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 9 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 10 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 14 Commuter Operations Center Subcommittee (10 am)
- 14 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 15 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

January 2005

- 5 Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- 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 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 18 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9 am)
- 25 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am) *tentative*
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 27 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
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Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

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