



TPB APPROVES REGIONAL GREEN STREETS POLICY

During its February meeting, the TPB approved a regional Green Streets policy promoting street design strategies to decrease storm water runoff.

Specifically, the “Green Streets” concept promotes the use of planted vegetation and other “green” treatments like permeable pavement materials and rain gardens along roadways to reduce or slow runoff. These treatments serve as natural filters to stop pollutants before they enter storm drains, which can be a more cost-effective alternative



Rain gardens collect and filter stormwater runoff from paved surfaces like sidewalks and roads.

to traditional engineering approaches. Reducing runoff volumes and rates can also lessen the frequency and severity of flooding.

Beyond these benefits, Green Streets treatments also beautify streets, making them more welcoming places to walk or bicycle. The shade and natural cooling effects that street trees and other vegetation provide make streets more comfortable places to be during hot summer months, reduce air-conditioning costs for nearby buildings, and moderate the urban heat island effect.

(Continued on page 4)

TPB BRIEFED ON PLACE+OPPORTUNITY

The TPB received a briefing at its February 19 meeting on “Place+Opportunity: Strategies for Creating Great Communities and a Stronger Region,” a report that was recently approved by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). The report provides a toolkit of strategies designed to strengthen the region’s Activity Centers—whether they’re highly urban places, suburban town centers, or traditional towns—by expanding economic and social opportunity

for the people who live, work, or do business in them.

The report categorizes each center into one of six “place types” and one of four “opportunity types,” based on shared market, urban form, and socioeconomic characteristics. The classification system is designed to identify common needs and support strategic investment and development to help communities meet their aspirations for their Activity Centers.

(Continued on page 5)

Upcoming meetings and items of interest:

TPB Meeting: March 19, 2014

- Briefing on Project Submissions for Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2014 CLRP
- Briefing on the District Department of Transportation’s Draft Strategic Vision Plan called “moveDC”

Inside this issue of *TPBnews*:

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 2 | Board Receives Update on Traffic Signal Timing and Optimization | 4 | Draft Work Programs for FY2015 Presented |
| 3 | CLRP Briefing Sparks Discussion of Priorities Plan Role | 5 | Upcoming March Agenda Items |

BOARD RECEIVES UPDATE ON TRAFFIC SIGNAL TIMING AND OPTIMIZATION

At its February 19 meeting, the TPB received an update on ongoing traffic signal timing and optimization activities throughout the Washington region, including the results of a 2013 TPB survey to see how many of the region's 5,500 traffic signals were undergoing regular retiming checks.

According to staff, the TPB has conducted the regional survey every few years since the early 2000s, when traffic signal optimization was identified by the TPB as a strategy for reducing vehicle emissions caused by unnecessary idling and congestion. In 2002, the TPB formally adopted traffic signal optimization as one of several Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures, or TERMS, to meet federal air quality standards.

At the meeting on February 19, TPB staff reported that the most recent survey found that 76 percent of the region's traffic signals—about 4,200 in all—had been checked or retimed at least once between 2009 and 2012. Traffic engineers generally recommend checking or retiming signals at least once every three years in order to maintain optimal timing, according to the presentation from staff.

Though the share of signals that have been checked or retimed in the most recent survey was down slightly compared to the last survey, carried out in 2009, the total number of checked signals significantly exceeded the TPB's 2002 goal of having 3,000 of the region's signals regularly checked and retimed.

The February 19 update to the Board also featured a briefing by Ling Li, of the Virginia Department of Transportation, on the agency's traffic signal timing and optimization efforts in Northern Virginia.

Li, who also serves as chair of the TPB's Traffic Signals Subcommittee, explained to the Board that VDOT uses both computer-

ized pre-timing methods for traffic signals as well as real-time traffic monitoring and traffic management strategies to optimize traffic flow.

"We're experiencing lots of nonrecurring congestion, such as incidents and special events or weather events, and therefore we have enhanced our real-time management strategies," she said.

Following Li's presentation, Board member Jay Fisette, who represents Arlington County, encouraged TPB staff to reach out to the Greater Washington Board of Trade to learn more about that group's interest in further coordinating and optimizing traffic signal timing in the region.

Fisette said the group raised it as a specific issue at a recent meeting: "There was quite an explicit concern raised about crossing jurisdictional lines. Maybe the Board of Trade has some specific examples of what appear to others to be backups due to lack of coordination," he said.

The TPB will continue to collect and share information about ongoing traffic signal timing and optimization activities throughout the region, and to serve as a forum for agencies responsible for traffic signals to share best practices and coordinate where possible to further improve traffic signal optimization. ♦

Search Launched for New Transportation Planning Director

The Council of Governments has kicked off its search for the next Director of Transportation Planning. COG is looking for an expert, forward-thinking leader who's up to the challenge of guiding regional transportation planning in the National Capital Region.

mwcog.org/dtpdirectorsearch

CLRP BRIEFING SPARKS DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES PLAN ROLE

On February 19, the TPB was briefed on changes to the schedule for the 2014 update to the CLRP, a process which is currently underway.

According to Bob Griffiths, acting co-director of transportation planning at the TPB, project submissions for the update, as well as a revised financial plan, are still being finalized and will be released on March 13 for a 30-day public comment period. According to Griffiths, the TPB will be asked at its April 16 meeting to approve the project submissions and a scope of work for the air quality conformity assessment required as part of the update.

Griffiths' briefing sparked a discussion among several Board members about whether and how the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, which the Board approved in January, might affect the projects submitted for inclusion in the forthcoming CLRP update.

Jonathan Way, a Board member representing the City of Manassas, was the first to ask whether the strategies in the Priorities Plan would influence the current CLRP update. "To what extent do you see that interface happening in this CLRP, and what impact will it have on the schedule?" he asked.

Griffiths explained that the Priorities Plan would actually have the greatest impact on future updates to the CLRP, beginning in 2015, since so many of the project submissions for this update have already been identified.

"We're so far along in the process for this year's update that there would be little time for that to influence the

implementing agencies' submissions for this round," Griffiths said. "But we would expect, in 2015 and in future years, to see the regional transportation priorities reflected in some of the submissions that we receive."

Harriet Tregoning, who represented the District of Columbia Office of Planning on the Board, expressed disap-

pointment that the Priorities Plan would not influence the 2014 CLRP update. She asked staff to identify the best point in the CLRP update process for Board members to consider regional priorities when making decisions about projects to include or not include in the update. "I think this body needs to know whether we're supporting the goals of our collective 22 jurisdictions when we make our decisions or whether we are unintentionally undermining them," she said.

Others on the Board echoed the need for more detail from staff in how the Priorities Plan will affect updates to the CLRP, whether now or in the future. Jay Fiset, of Arlington County, and Lyn

Erickson, of the Maryland Department of Transportation, both agreed that additional internal work is needed in order to figure out more precisely how the Priorities Plan can and will inform updates to the CLRP.

Griffiths told the Board that staff would work to develop a detailed plan by the March TPB meeting for conducting a qualitative comparative assessment of the Priorities Plan and the CLRP. He did also say that he thought several of the projects currently slated for inclusion in the 2014 CLRP update, especially commitments to transit maintenance and core capacity improvements, were supportive of some of the key strategies in the Priorities Plan. ♦

Revised 2014 CLRP Update Schedule

March 13	CLRP & TIP Project Submissions and Draft Scope of Work Released for Public Comment at Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
April 12	Public Comment Period Ends
April 16	TPB Reviews Public Comments and is asked to Approve Project Submissions and Draft Scope of Work
September 11	Draft CLRP & TIP and Conformity Assessment Released for Public Comment at the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
September 17	TPB Briefed on the Draft CLRP & TIP and Conformity Assessment
October 10	Public Comment Period Ends
October 15	TPB Reviews Public Comments and Responses to Comments, and is asked to Approve the CLRP & TIP and Conformity Assessment

GREEN STREETS POLICY APPROVED

(Continued from page 1)

The policy encourages local jurisdictions to adopt Green Streets policies, or to revise existing policies, that include key best practices that the TPB and its stakeholders have agreed are essential. Those best practices are outlined in a resource guide that includes sample policies, guidebooks, standards, and manuals from other agencies and organizations around the country.

In the Washington region, many jurisdictions already have Green Streets policies in place, including Arlington and the District of Columbia. Prince George's County adopted a Green Streets policy in 2012 requiring all County-financed road, sidewalk, trail, and transit projects to include environmental site design elements to reduce runoff from heavy rains.

During a discussion of the draft regional policy in January, some board members commented about the possible implications of implementing Green Streets policies on the local level. Some, like Catherine Hudgins and Linda Smyth from Fairfax County, expressed concerns about the possible cost

related to long-term maintenance of Green Streets infrastructure.

At the February meeting Paul Smith, of Frederick County, said he likes that the policy encourages jurisdictions to pursue Green Streets policies that are practical for them.

The TPB began developing the regional Green Streets policy in December 2012 in response to a request from the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership. In April 2013, the TPB convened a workshop of more than 90 staff from area transportation and environmental agencies or other interested individuals to discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Green Streets treatments.

Later this year, the TPB will hold another workshop to provide training on Green Streets best practices. The TPB will also conduct periodic surveys of area jurisdictions to assess the degree to which Green Streets policies have been adopted and implemented at the local and state level. ♦

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMS FOR FY2015 PRESENTED

At the February 19 Board meeting, TPB staff presented drafts of the annual work programs and budgets for the TPB and for the TPB's Commuter Connections program for FY 2015.

The TPB's federally required work program, known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), outlines planned work activities in six major areas, including, among other things, development of the CLRP and TIP, modeling of future travel demand, and providing technical assistance to the state departments of transportation and WMATA.

The total proposed UPWP budget for FY 2015 is \$12.7 million, unchanged from the previous year.

The Commuter Connections Work Program outlines \$5.2 million in spending on the Commuter Connections Operations Center, the Guaranteed Ride Home Program, and mass marketing and employer outreach, among other activities.

Both draft work programs will be considered for approval by the TPB at its next meeting on March 19. ♦

PLACE+OPPORTUNITY

(Continued from page 1)

The place types in the report reflect existing or likely economic conditions and development patterns in centers, based on things like the mix of residential and commercial uses, development densities, and walkability. Opportunity types reflect the social and economic opportunities that people are likely to face as a result of new development, taking into account existing or planned job access via transit, housing affordability, and income diversity.

The strategies in Place+Opportunity aim to make Activity Centers better places to live, work, and do business for more people, which supports the region's long-term transportation goals, too.

The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, approved by the TPB in January, calls specifically for concentrating more of the region's future household and job growth in Activity Centers, then connecting those centers and circulating people within them using more efficient travel



modes—transit, bicycling, and walking, in particular.

The Priorities Plan says that concentrating development in Activity Centers provides opportunities to take greater advantage of existing highway and transit infrastructure, to move more people more efficiently, and to improve socioeconomic balance, especially by focusing attention on Activity Centers on the eastern side of the region.

Like Place+Opportunity, the Priorities Plan is designed to be a resource to assist local decision-makers in developing improvements to their local communities that also benefit the entire region.

Following the briefing, TPB Chair Lovain noted the commonalities between Place+Opportunity and the Priorities Plan. These two plans “have a great potential to reinforce each other,” he said. ♦

UPCOMING MARCH AGENDA ITEMS

The March 19 TPB meeting is expected to include the following items:

- Approval of Amendments to the FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Approval of FY 2014 UPWP Carryover Funding to FY 2015
- Approval of FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Approval of FY 2015 Commuter Connections Work Program (UPWP)
- Briefing on Project Submissions for Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2014 CLRP
- Briefing on the Draft Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment of the 2014 CLRP and FY 2015-2020 TIP
- Briefing on an Initial Assessment of the 2014 Update of

the CLRP and the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP)

- Briefing on the District Department of Transportation's Draft Strategic Vision Plan called “moveDC” ♦

Subscribe Online

Readers of the *TPBnews* can subscribe online to get this newsletter, the *TPB Weekly Report*, and other TPB-related materials.

Visit our website at www.mwcog.org/subscribe and enter your name and e-mail address to sign up. Monthly notifications are sent out directing readers to find the *TPBnews* on the web. ♦

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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 North Capitol St., NE (Enter from First St., NE).

March 2014

- 7 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 7 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 12 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 12 Car Free Day Steering Committee (11:30 am)
- 13 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 18 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 18 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 18 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 18 Regional TDM Marketing Group (2 pm)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 20 Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (12:30 pm)
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 25 TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 26 Regional Taxicab Regulators (1 pm)
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)

April 2014

- 4 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 10 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 15 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 17 Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (noon)
- 22 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 24 Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

May 2014

- 2 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 2 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 7 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 7 Car Free Day Steering Committee (11:30 am)
- 15 Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 16 Bike to Work Day (all day)
- 20 Annual Transit Forum (11 am)
- 20 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 20 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 22 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 21 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 23 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)

Dates and times subject to change.

Please visit our website at

www.mwcog.org

for up-to-date information.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Bryan Hayes at (202) 962-3273 or bhayes@mwcog.org, or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Please allow seven working days for preparation of material.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290