



UPCOMING MEETINGS
AND ITEMS OF
INTEREST:

TPB Meeting,
February 16:

- Briefing on the Report on Governance of WMATA
- Briefing on MATOC Experience during the January 26 Storm
- Briefing on Project Submissions and Draft Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2011 CLRP

More information may be found at:
www.mwcog.org/transportation

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TPB news

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TPB RECEIVES BRIEFING ON PRIORITY CORRIDOR NETWORK

On January 19, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) received a presentation on the results of a study that examined the possibility of expanded bus priority treatment for the Washington region.

The Metrobus Priority Corridor Network (PCN) Evaluation Study lays out a long range vision for bus priority treatments on the existing Metrobus arterial street network. The purpose of the study was to identify arterial corridor segments on the existing Metrobus network where running-way improvements appear to be most beneficial, quantify regional benefits associated with priority bus treatments, and advocate for



The report analyzed the benefits of incorporating exclusive bus lanes on corridors in the region.

infrastructure improvements that meet regional goals identified in the TPB Vision.

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UPDATED TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL TO BE RELEASED FOR TESTING

One of the central components of the TPB's technical activities is its Travel Demand Modeling. The existing Travel Demand Model (Model), Version 2.2, has been in place since March 2008, but a more robust, refined, and updated Version 2.3 is to be released for testing as early as February.

The TPB uses the model to forecast future travel in the region. The model produces travel-related forecasts based on the best estimate of land activity changes, the

future highway and transit systems, and policy inputs. Travel Demand Modeling can forecast things like the number of trips generated in a specific area and trip flows between jurisdictions – both by purpose and by mode of travel. By providing insights into “what if?” types of questions, the model supports many of the TPB planning activities, including air quality conformity, updates to the CLRP, and a variety of planning studies.

(Continued on page 3)

PCN EVALUATION STUDY

(Continued from page 1)

The study outlines the benefits this network would provide, including the reduction of Metro operating subsidies, the increase in system ridership and the diversion of trips from the heavy rail network to the surface transit system. The study evaluated the need for dedicated bus lanes for the PCN, determining which segments could support such high priority treatments and which required a lower level of investment. Increasingly, traffic congestion limits the operational efficiency of the bus system.

The PCN concept was developed with the idea of focusing resources on the most productive lines in the Metrobus system, with three specific goals:

1. Improve competitiveness of bus transit;
2. Support existing and planned land use and economic development; and
3. Improve efficiency of the transportation system.

The study found that a typical bus spends 50 to 60 percent of its run time in motion, 20 percent serving bus stops, and 20 percent in traffic signal or congestion delay. The study determined that there are two specific types of improvements needed to improve travel time. First, a range of service types must be layered upon each other in these corridors to create a “family of service” package focused on meeting numerous market segments within each corridor. Second, improvements along the bus running-way must be made to reduce time spent at traffic signals and in congestion.

The PCN is one of WMATA’s proposed solutions to the in-

creasing costs and continued degradation of bus service due to road congestion. WMATA has identified 23 high ridership corridors to receive priority treatments, which consist of both service adjustments and improvements to the bus running-way. Service adjustments proposed include restructured routes and schedules, skip-stop operations and additional service overlays. Running-way improvements could include bus lanes, transit signal priority, queue jumpers, bus stop location, and off-board fare payment systems.

The study examined the benefits for service and running-way improvements, as well as the impacts to travel conditions for motorists (compared to 2030 service improvements only). It found that average daily bus speeds increase by 15 percent and average travel time per PCN passenger decreases by 10 percent. With regard to the impacts on motorists, the study found that average daily auto vehicle hours increase by 2 percent, but that there is no significant impact on regional VMT.

The PCN Evaluation study was completed with funds from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

The final report of the PCN Evaluation Study, released on May 10, 2010, concluded that approximately 90 miles of the 235-mile PCN system warranted dedicated bus lanes, while the rest of the network warranted “spot” improvements at defined locations that generate significant travel time delay for buses. The report may be found on the WMATA website: http://www.wmata.com/pdfs/planning/PCN_Eval_final_report.pdf

WMATA is moving forward with implementing the service enhancements along

“I think it’s really important that we look at this as a regional issue.”

– TPB Member

Marc Elrich,

Montgomery County



2011 TPB First Vice Chair Todd Turner (right) presented 2010 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee Chair Maureen Budetti with a plaque recognizing her service as Chair of the CAC.

many priority corridors. However, nearly all running-way improvements require cooperation and coordination with the state and local departments of transportation (DOTs) who own and maintain the bus running-way (street) and bus stop (sidewalk) real estate. Several TPB members inquired how local governments had been involved in the PCN Evaluation Study, as well as how the local bus services would be integrated into such a network without a negative impact on local service. The study noted that there would be a negligible impact to local bus services, which primarily serve single jurisdictions, rather than provide long-haul service across jurisdictional boundaries.

WMATA is working with the DOTs to determine how bus priority treatments might be implemented across the region. Work on some of the corridors has already begun, funded by the \$58.8 million TIGER grant awarded to the TPB on behalf of the Washington region.

TPB Vice Chair Todd Turner of the City of Bowie noted the impact the TIGER grant improvements could have on the recommendations in the PCN Evaluation Study: “Hopefully, [TIGER] will be a model that gives an opportunity for local jurisdictions to buy into, and say yes, there are going to be improvements and this is how it occurred through the TIGER process.” ♦

TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL

The Version 2.3 Model has been developed using the 2007-2008 Household Travel Survey data, the latest survey data available. It has also been developed with a finer detailed zone system than the previous model. The zone system is an arrangement of small geographic areas that are used to generate travel patterns. Other technical refinements have also been made, such as better representation of both motorized and non-motorized travel for all purposes, as well as more specificity given to time of day. These and other improvements enable the Version 2.3 Model to provide more robust information on demographics and travel characteristics. As a result, the Version 2.3 Model is more effectively calibrated to the Metropolitan Washington Region.

The TPB received a briefing on the Version 2.3 Model from Ron Milone of TPB staff at its January meeting. During this briefing, Harriet Tregoning, Director of the DC Office of Planning, inquired about the specificity in commuting choices that the Version 2.3 Model would represent. Noting that some commute trips involve several transportation methods, Tregoning said, “I imagine every commuter rail trip involves a different mode as

well. At the front end it involves a mode, maybe at the back end an additional mode. Is that able to be reflected in the modeling?” Milone replied in the affirmative, and noted that the Version 2.3 Model will be able to assign transit trips to a transit network, which is a capability that had not existed in the previous model.

Arlington County Board Member Christopher Zimmerman raised another question about the boundaries of the modeled area, and inquired why the City of Baltimore or Baltimore County is not included. Milone replied that there is overlap in the study areas between the TPB and the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Organization. Ronald Kirby, Director of the Transportation Planning Department, added that travel from Baltimore into the region is represented in the Version 2.3 Model as “external travel.”

Zimmerman expressed enthusiasm for the updated Version 2.3 Model. “I’m very encouraged by the tremendous increase in fine-grain detail,” he said. “I think it has potential to really enhance the quality of the data and its usefulness.” ♦

OTHER JANUARY AGENDA ITEMS

The TPB’s January 19 meeting also included the following items:

- Approval of Funding and Transmittal Letter for the TPB’s 2011 Membership in the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO).

- Review of an Outline and Preliminary Budget for the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Information and materials for the monthly TPB meeting are posted on the TPB website one week prior to the meeting: www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb. ♦

INSIDE A MATOC INCIDENT

“Timely notification about transportation incidents is crucial to us to be able to proactively mitigate negative effects and maintain our on-time performance so that transit is a reliable and consistent way of getting around.”
- Eric Marx, PRTC

At its meeting on January 19, the TPB heard firsthand from an end-user about the value of the services provided by the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program. The MATOC mission is to provide regional situational awareness of transportation conditions and incidents to improve traveler safety and reduce transportation delays. MATOC activities include obtaining and communicating timely information during major incidents; enabling operating agencies and the traveling public to make informed and coordinated decisions; maintaining a web-based transportation information system; and facilitating the adoption of standard operating procedures by transportation agencies.

Eric Marx and Doris Chism, staff from the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), provided the TPB with a snapshot of one incident where MATOC communications made a positive impact on the level of service PRTC was able to provide its customers. PRTC is a suburban public transit agency providing several different modes of operation: OmniRide express bus service, OmniLink local bus service, and OmniMatch ride-matching services. PRTC is co-owner of Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

Marx stressed that timely notification is crucial to mitigate negative impacts and maintain on time performance of PRTC services. Marx said that after PRTC staff receives MATOC alerts, they quickly assess potential impacts to PRTC service and implement changes as warranted. For this reason, notifications need to be accurate, frequently updated, and related to PRTC service to be of benefit to PRTC. Marx said MATOC provides precise information about incidents because the only job of MATOC staff is to monitor incidents that impact the region’s transportation network.

Chism described an incident on the afternoon of October 4, 2010, which closed the northbound lanes of I-95. The incident occurred during the evening rush hour, during which heavy traffic is found southbound on I-95. PRTC OmniRide commuter bus service is impacted by this type of incident because PRTC must “deadhead” buses from points south to downtown Washington as part of its operations.

Because of the information provided through MATOC, PRTC was able to notify customers of a potential delay and detour buses around the incident, resulting in only one missed trip out of the 121 trips scheduled during the afternoon commute.

Marx outlined recommendations to the TPB for enhancing the MATOC Program. He said PRTC would benefit from more targeted notifications. He said it would be helpful for MATOC to track upcoming significant events and notify accordingly, such as serve as a central clearinghouse for transportation-related information related to large gatherings on the National Mall.



The MATOC Operations Center provides staff with the capability to monitor and provide timely information about incidents throughout the region.

The TPB also heard from MATOC Facilitator Taran Hutchinson, who provided an overview of incident detection and the criteria for MATOC incidents.

Hutchinson also described the MATOC situational awareness alerts, which are developed and distributed for regional incidents. MATOC staff follows up with affected agencies throughout an event, and updates agencies every 30 minutes or as the situation changes. MATOC staff also provides an incident close-out notification.

At its February meeting, the TPB will receive a briefing on MATOC Program activities and observations from the January 26 winter storm that left many commuters stranded on their way home from work. TPB News will carry a story on this report in the March issue. ♦

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TPB LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

How are transportation decisions made in the Washington region? How can community leaders make a difference? The TPB's Community Leadership Institute (CLI) is designed answer these questions.

The CLI is a series of two half-day workshops for community leaders and activists that will enhance participants' ability to get involved in transportation decision-making. Facilitated by former elected officials, the workshops use interactive group exercises and discussions to help participants better understand regional challenges, strategies for change, and opportunities for successful public involvement. Participants discuss ways in which the interests of their local communities connect with the planning issues facing the entire region. By providing this big-picture context,

the CLI encourages participants to "think regionally and act locally."

When: Thursday, March 31, 2011: 6:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.
(dinner included)

Saturday, April 2, 2011: 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
(breakfast, lunch included)

Where: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NE
Washington, DC 20009
Training Center (lobby level)

For more information on the CLI, please visit www.mwkog.org/transportation/activities/cli/ or contact Deborah Kerson Bilek, of TPB staff at 202-962-3317 or dbilek@mwkog.org. ♦

UPCOMING FEBRUARY AGENDA ITEMS

The TPB's February 16 agenda is expected to include the following items:

- Approval of Appointments to the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Year 2011.
- Briefing on the Report on Governance of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) by the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council.
- Briefing on Transforming Governance of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority: Implementation Plan and Schedule for WMATA Governance Reform Announced by Governor McDonnell, Governor O'Malley, and Mayor Gray.
- Briefing on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Activities and Observations from the January 26 Winter Storm.
- Briefing on Project Submissions for the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2011 Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP).
- Briefing on the Draft Scope of Work for Air Quality Conformity Assessment for the 2011 CLRP.
- Briefing on the Draft FY 2012 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP).
- Briefing on the Draft FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Information and materials for the monthly TPB meeting are posted on the TPB website one week prior to the meeting: www.mwkog.org/transportation/tpb. ♦



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 N. Capitol St., N.E. (Enter from 1st St., N.E.).

February 2011

- 3 Freight Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 4 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee Joint Meeting (10 am)
- 16 TPB Priorities Plan Scoping Task Force (10 am)
- 16 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)
- 28 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)

March 2011

- 3 Freight Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 4 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 4 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 9 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10am)
- 9 Car Free Day Steering Committee (11:30 am)
- 10 Freight Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 10 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 MOVES Task Force (10 am)
- 15 Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 15 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 15 Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 15 Regional TDM Marketing Group (2 pm)
- 16 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 17 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 18 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 22 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)

April 2011

- 1 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 1 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 12 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee Joint Meeting (10 am)
- 14 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 19 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 20 TPB Priorities Plan Scoping Task Force (10 am)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 26 Regional Bus Subcommittee (noon)



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 Sarah Crawford at scrawford@mwcog.org, (202) 962-3237 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD). Allow seven working days for preparation of material.

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