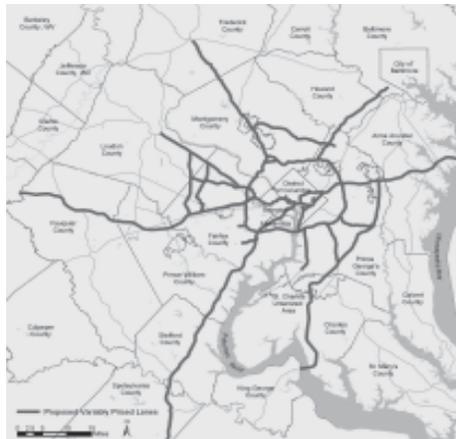


## TPB Active in Value Pricing Analysis and Policies

The Transportation Planning Board continues to be actively involved in a number of aspects of transportation “value pricing” and “variably priced lanes,” according to a presentation by Ronald Kirby, Director of the Department of Transportation Planning, at the TPB meeting on November 15. The TPB’s activities include analysis of individual projects, development and analysis of a regional scenario of variably priced lanes, and development of regional policies related to value pricing.



The TPB’s scenario study is looking at a regional system of variably priced lanes.

Value pricing generally refers to charging higher user fees at times and locations of high demand on highways and other transportation facilities. Value pricing proposals are of increasing interest to lawmakers to supplement fuel tax revenues as construction costs continue to rise. Value priced proposals are not new to the Washington region. The Intercountry Connector (ICC) is a planned Maryland variably priced facility that was added to the CLRP in 2004, and seems to finally be moving towards construction after decades of study and debate.

In 2005, the Virginia Beltway HOT (High-Occupancy/Toll) Lanes project was added to the CLRP. This project will add two new lanes in each direction to the Virginia portion of the Capital Beltway, from the Springfield Interchange to near the American Legion Bridge. These new lanes would be free for High-Occupancy Vehicles (HOVs) containing

See **Value Pricing** on page 2

## MetroAccess Makes Progress, But Still Faces Challenges

MetroAccess, the region’s public transit service for people with disabilities, has made a number of important improvements in recent months, but “there are still a number of very significant issues which have yet to be addressed,” said Takoma Park Mayor Kathy Porter in a briefing to the Transportation Planning Board on November 15.



WMATA

Mayor Porter, who has chaired the TPB’s Access for Advisory Committee, and Wendy Klancher of the TPB staff delivered a status report on recommendations for improving

See **MetroAccess** on page 4

## Value Pricing *continued from page 1*

three or more persons as well as transit vehicles. However, private vehicles without three or more passengers would be required to pay a toll, which can vary by the time of day.

Maryland is also working on additional variably priced lane projects. In contrast to Virginia, Maryland's projects will not allow HOVs to travel without paying the toll. Maryland is currently exploring the possibility of adding these Express Toll Lanes to highway facilities in many of its most congested corridors.

While the Virginia and Maryland concepts differ, these new, non-traditional toll facilities have a major feature in common: the toll rates change according to the demand on the roadway. The goal of increasing tolls during times of peak demand is to ensure that these new lanes remain free-flowing. These types of lanes, whether HOT Lanes (Virginia) or Express Toll Lanes (Maryland and the District of Columbia), are referred to collectively as Variably Priced Lanes (VPLs).

### *Analysis at the regional level*

The TPB has brought a regional perspective to various value pricing proposals. The TPB established a value pricing task force shortly after hosting a June 2003 regional value pricing conference. The goal of the task force is to examine the benefits of value pricing for the region. The task force established a list of goals which were approved by the TPB in 2005. In October of 2006, the TPB was awarded a grant from the Federal Highway Administration to study a regional network of variably priced lanes. Analysis performed under this grant is being overseen by the TPB's Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation, whereas the value pricing work performed by the TPB prior to this grant was funded under the Regional Accessibility and Mobility Study (RMAS).

At the November 19 board meeting, Mr. Kirby briefly reviewed the two value pricing projects described above, as well as a new entry to the 2006 CLRP this year, a study of re-striping and converting the two reversible HOV lanes along the Shirley Highway (I-95/395) into three variably priced HOT lanes. The study is

also investigating extending two reversible lanes from their current terminus in Dumfries, Virginia, to the Fredericksburg area.

Mr. Kirby then summarized the value pricing research conducted under RMAS, including an analysis of a regional network of variably priced lanes. This network was formulated by the task force, and includes adding two variably priced lanes (VPLs) to all freeways in the region, adding one VPL to all arterial roadways outside of the Capital Beltway, and converting all existing HOV lanes to VPLs. The network presupposes direct access ramps at key intersections.

Mr. Kirby presented the first round of results of this analysis to the board. First, there are many facilities in the region which have a directional demand—towards downtown in the morning and outbound in the evening. These facilities could have the number of added lanes reduced, allowing reversible VPLs to be implemented instead. Secondly, he noted that the toll rates for the ICC and Beltway HOT Lanes facilities in this analysis are higher than rates predicted by previous studies of these facilities independently. This result speaks to the network effect—that these facilities are worth more when they exist as part of a network versus as stand-alone facilities.

---

The TPB analysis found that a full network of value-priced lanes has higher value than the sum of the individual segments.

---

### *Looking at enhanced bus transit*

Mr. Kirby then reported on the results of an analysis which added enhanced transit services to a limited HOT Lane network in Virginia (the Capital Beltway and I-95/395 HOT Lane corridors). This study looked at increased bus service levels on routes which currently use these facilities, and analyzed how this transit service impacted HOV use, toll rates and other operating characteristics of the toll lanes. The analysis showed an increase in transit use, and decreases in HOV use and the toll rates. These changes can be accounted for by concluding that HOV users moved to the enhanced transit service, freeing up space for more paying vehicles in the HOT lanes. These additional paying vehicles moving from the

other lanes resulted in unchanged toll revenue and faster average speeds in the mixed-use lanes.

Mr. Kirby summarized the findings of the TPB's value pricing research to date:

- Toll rates will have to vary by segment, direction and time of day;
- Transit services can affect demand and toll rates significantly;
- A full network of VPLs has higher value than the sum of the individual segments ("the network effect");
- Access and egress issues need to be addressed.

Chris Zimmerman of the Arlington County Board noted one point in particular in Mr. Kirby's presentation: "By putting pricing on the system, you can actually increase the rate of flow, and increase the capacity of the system." He said this finding, which seems counter-intuitive to many people, could be used to address anticipated public opposition, which is perceived as a barrier to implementing value pricing projects.

Mr. Zimmerman also noted that "it turns out that if you 'turn up' transit use, it has a really beneficial effect for everyone else. This (research) shows that in quantitative terms."

The next steps for value pricing at the TPB is the Federal Highway Administration's Value Pricing Pilot Program grant. The cooperative agreement for this grant was signed in September of 2006, with a \$300,000 budget for its one-year duration. This grant will allow the TPB to expand the scenario developed under RMAS to include additional corridors and facilities. The study will perform additional sensitivity tests, as well as evaluate impacts on land use and low-income and minority populations.

At the November meeting, TPB Chairman Michael Knapp thanked Maryland Delegate Carol Petzold for chairing the TPB's Task Force on Value Pricing. Delegate Petzold will be leaving the TPB next year. The TPB is expected to appoint a new chair to the task force in January.

The task force will meet once every two months throughout 2007, beginning in January. For more information on the status report, see [www.mwcog.org/transportation](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation). ■

## **2007 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee**

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for membership on the 2007 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), please contact COG/TPB staff. 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@mwcog.org](mailto:jswanson@mwcog.org). For more information, call 202/962-3295.

## **TLC Moving Ahead**

The Transportation Planning Board's new Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) program, which was approved in October, is being designed to provide support to local jurisdictions as they work through the challenges of connecting land use and transportation, and to share success stories and proven tools with local governments and agencies across the region.

The TLC program will begin with a six-month pilot with two components: 1) implement a regional clearinghouse to document local and state experiences with land use and transportation coordination and 2) offer short-term technical assistance through consultants to local jurisdictions to advance their coordination activities.

At the December 20 TPB meeting, the board is scheduled to approve the program brochure and begin the process for receiving applications for technical assistance. For more information, see [www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org). ■

TPB News, 777 North Capitol St, NE, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239  
202-962-3295; [jswanson@mwcog.org](mailto:jswanson@mwcog.org)  
"TPB News" at [www.mwcog.org/transportation](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation)

## **MetroAccess** *continued from page 1*

MetroAccess service that were developed earlier this year by an ad hoc advisory committee of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Testifying during the TPB's public comment period, Kathleen Walsh, Disability Rights Program Manager at the Equal Rights Center, urged the TPB to help fix the system so that people with disabilities can "... enjoy life in this vibrant city with the ease of the able-bodied population."

Of the recommendations made by the ad hoc committee, some have already been implemented, some are pending final approval by the WMATA Board, and others are still under consideration.

### ***Already implemented***

MetroAccess offers its customer guide in Braille. It also has amended its cancellation policy from a cutoff of 4:30 the day before the trip to just 2 hours before the trip. Another scheduling improvement is the elimination of the 14-day window for advance reservations, which can instead be scheduled 7 days in advance. According to Ms. Klancher, this change means greater flexibility in scheduling.

WMATA also created the Office of Community Transportation Services within MetroAccess and hired paratransit expert Steve Yaffe to run it. As director of the office, Yaffe reports directly to the General Manager, which has elevated the visibility of the MetroAccess program.

### ***Pending WMATA board approval***

The WMATA Customer Services Operations and Safety Committee approved a set of recommendations at its November meeting that are slated to be presented to the WMATA Board in December. Those recommendations include additional staffing within MetroAccess to oversee quality monitoring, and adding vehicles to increase the spare vehicle ratio from Metro Access's current ratio of 10 percent to the industry standard 20 percent.

A major recommendation was made to provide door-to-door, rather than curb-to-curb, service. Provided by MetroAccess by its previous contractor, it is required in some instances by the Americans with Disabilities Act. A consultant hired by WMATA to study the costs associated with such a move has reported the cost of this service upgrade would be negligible. WMATA is also considering contracting with the TPB to develop and manage a web-based regional clearinghouse of specialized transportation services. This clearinghouse would provide information on all of the services available for people with disabilities and older adults, and would offer some phone support.

### ***Still to be implemented***

The remaining recommendations still to be implemented include staffing and communications issues. The recommendations call for staffing increases by the Metro Access contractor, NB Transportation, of reservationists, dispatchers, schedulers and drivers. In addition to increased staffing levels, it is also recommended that NB Transportation ensure that driver pay and benefits be made competitive to stabilize their workforce. Additional staffers were also recommended for Metro Access to conduct performance data verification and respond in a more timely manner to customer complaints.

In an effort to address communications issues with its ridership, recommendations that WMATA consider include convening a MetroAccess users group to ensure riders' concerns are being heard and acted upon, especially at the Board level. Another significant issue is providing clear information for the public about the changes being considered in the revamped eligibility process, and providing transitional transportation services to those riders whose eligibility may be phased out under the new criteria.

Ms. Klancher concluded her presentation to the TPB by stating that the Access for All Committee would continue to monitor the progress of WMATA in acting on these recommendations, and would conduct an independent TPB review of MetroAccess in February or March, which was also a recommendation from the MetroAccess study. ■

## Other November Agenda Items

The TPB's November agenda also included the following items:

- Appointment of *nominating committee for Year 2007 TPB officers*. Chairman Knapp appointed Phil Mendelson (D.C.), Christopher Zimmerman (Virginia) and Kathy Porter (Maryland). The committee will present a slate of nominees at the TPB's December 20 meeting.
- Approval of funding for the *Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)*. Former TPB chair Phil Mendelson was recently elected president of AMPO.
- Report on the regional *"Street Smart" pedestrian and bicycle safety education campaign*. The next campaign is planned for April 2007.
- Briefing on the draft *Call for Projects and schedule for the air quality conformity assessment* for the 2007 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan and FY2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). ■

## Upcoming TPB Agenda

The TPB's December agenda will include the following items:

- Report of nominating committee for year 2007 TPB officers
- Appointment of the six members designated by the 2006 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the CAC for the year 2007
- Approval of brochure and application form for the Transportation/Land-Use Connection (TLC) pilot program
- Approval of the final Call for Projects document for the 2007 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and FY 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Approval of amendments to the FY 2007-2012 TIP to fund the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs

## Bike To Work Day Wins Marketing Award

**FRIDAY MAY 19**

# Bike to Work Day 2006

**Fun, Food and Prizes!**

**PRE-REGISTER BY MAY 12**

WIN A FREE BIKE! Register online and you'll automatically be entered into a drawing to win one of several bicycles valued up to \$1,000, donated by City Bikes.

**REGISTER TODAY** for this free event at [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org) or 202-518-0524

Pick up your FREE T-Shirt, complimentary snack, free giveaways and more at one of the convenient pit stops on your way to work.

Visit [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org) for specific pit stop locations and times.

**PIT STOPS**  
ALEXANDRIA  
ARLINGTON  
BETHESDA  
BOWIE  
COLLEGE PARK  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DULLES  
FAIRFAX  
FAIRFAX CITY  
FREDERICK  
LA PLATA  
LEESBURG  
NORTH BETHESDA  
RESTON  
ROCKVILLE  
SILVER SPRING  
STERLING  
VIENNA

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS**

Logos for sponsors: goDCgo.com, Computer Pages, opens doors, CARIBU COFFEE, TIMBUK, D.C. Lottery, KREI, TOPEAK, BREZZEL, PEPBROS, BELL, RESTON, JAMA BICYCLES, JANDD, cannondale, HONEST TEA, WHOLE FOODS, CERAS.

The TPB's Commuter Connections received an award at the ACT Chesapeake Chapters Annual Meeting and Awards program on December 1 for their marketing efforts for the 2006 regional Bike to Work Day event. Through this annual event, Commuter Connections creates greater awareness of bicycling as a clean, fun and healthy way to get to work within the Washington metropolitan region.

- Approval of letter to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) offering TPB review and comment on Transportation Measures submitted by COG member governments to reduce air pollution.
- Update on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) program. MATOC was formerly known as "CapCom."
- Briefing on a proposed regional bus subcommittee of the TPB Technical Committee.
- Review of priority regional bicycle and pedestrian projects. ■

# 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).

## December 2006

- 1 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 1 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 14 TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (noon)
- 14 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 19 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee (10 am)
- 19 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (noon)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**

## January 2007

- 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 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 11 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 12 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 16 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 16 Street Smart Advisory Group (10 am)
- 16 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 16 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 17 Value Pricing Task Force (10 am)
- 17 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 19 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 23 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- 25 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)

## February 2007

- 2 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 2 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (noon)
- 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)
- 16 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 21 Transportation Planning Board (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