

TPB Considers Programs to Link Transportation and Land Use

The TPB at its June 21 meeting continued discussion of how to play a more active role in linking transportation and land use planning in the Washington region.

After Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, summarized for the Board the context of past TPB efforts and options for future initiatives patterned after programs in other regions, several Board members expressed a desire to move quickly and aggressively.

“Any start is better than doing nothing at all, but this region really demands pretty aggressive action,” said TPB Member Chris Zimmerman. “It takes so long to have an impact on these things; we’re looking at problems that are years out, but they’ll be really big if we don’t do

something about them in the interim.”

Following up on a presentation at the May meeting of the TPB at which he described preliminary research findings (see the May 2006 Issue of *TPB News* for more information), Kirby presented more specifics about how agencies like the TPB in other metropolitan areas administer grant programs to fund transportation projects that help achieve regional land use goals. Those goals include concentrating development near transit stations, facilitating greater densities of jobs and housing, and revitalizing areas that are under-developed in relation to the capacity of their existing transportation infrastructure. The TPB’s Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study

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Employer Recognition Awards



George Mason University was the recipient of a 2006 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Award on June 28, 2006. From left to right: Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Supervisor and TPB First Vice Chair; Josh Cantor, Director Parking and Transportation at George Mason University; Lillian Arevalo, Director of Operations, George Mason University; and James Larsen, Executive Director, Dulles Area Transportation Association.

TPB Looks at New Role in Human Service Transportation Coordination

Last year’s federal transportation bill requires new levels of coordination among organizations that receive federal funding and plan for human service transportation provision. The federal legislation—known as SAFETEA-LU—also added a number of other new requirements for human service transportation programs.

At the TPB meeting on June 21, Wendy Klancher of the TPB staff presented an overview of the role that TPB may play in meeting the new requirements.

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Transportation/Land Use

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has identified two land use goals in particular as potentially helpful in relieving traffic congestion: concentrating more household growth near existing and future employment centers, and encouraging more development on the eastern side of the region.

Based on the experience in those other regions, Kirby laid out a framework for three different potential TPB initiatives. Option 1 would be the launch of a program similar to those underway in the Atlanta and San Francisco Bay areas, in which about \$30 million annually would be committed to fund grants for both planning and capital projects chosen through a special selection process that emphasizes the connection with land use. Option 2 would be similar to a program in the Philadelphia region, and would involve funding only planning activities with a grant program that would disperse a much smaller amount of money. These grant programs typically fund projects such as pedestrian circulation studies and transit station access improvements.

A third option would entail an effort to draw from the results of the ongoing Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study the location-specific transportation needs most crucial to implementation of desired land use scenarios. The TPB would then focus attention on those needs and facilitate consideration of potential solutions that could be incorporated into the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). This option is similar to activities underway in other metropolitan areas where future transportation and land use scenarios have been studied and incorporated into transportation planning, and could be undertaken with no additional funding.



Atlanta's Livable Communities Initiative provides grants for both planning and capital projects chosen through a special selection process that emphasizes the connection with land use. Pictured above are planned improvements at Perimeter Center in the Atlanta region, including sidewalk connectivity, intersection improvements, a shuttle circulator, and other key transportation projects.

TPB Member Patricia Ticer said she found Option 3 to be undesirable because "it's not a basic change in how we go about doing things - we're in a real crisis situation now."

Board member Kathryn Porter concurred with the need for action, but questioned whether it was appropriate or wise for the TPB to administer funds for capital projects as called for in Option 1.

The enthusiasm expressed by some TPB members for aggressive action was tempered by other members who questioned how grant programs described in Options 1 and 2 would be funded and how funds would be distributed equitably among the region's jurisdictions.

TPB Member Hilda Barg noted that funding for transportation projects is already very limited, and that the federal sources used to fund the grant programs in other regions are already committed to other needs in this region such as the Virginia Railway Express. "My concern is losing this money," said Ms. Barg. "If we would lose that amount of money, what assurance do we have that these grants will be divided up in the region equally?"

Other members, including Mick Staton, questioned the applicability of the land use goals to outer jurisdictions. Staton expressed skepticism about the market demand for more concentrated housing development, especially among families with children. TPB Vice Chair

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Catherine Hudgins, however, pointed out that the development of denser, mixed-use centers in her jurisdiction of Fairfax County has not led to decreases in school-age population, and that existing suburban-style neighborhoods have benefited from the proximity to employment and shopping destinations.

Board member Charles Graves said he could speak to the positive impact of similar grant programs based on his experience in Atlanta. He noted, however, that the Washington region is unique in many ways, including the presence of three state-level jurisdictions. "I think the challenge is to think boldly, in terms of how we do something creatively and how we make an impact."

Given the interest expressed by TPB members in taking action, but the lack of a clear consensus on the form of action to be taken, Board Chairman Michael Knapp asked Kirby to provide the Board at the July meeting with more details about logistics of options for this region and discussion of potential challenges, especially funding. "Clearly this has engendered the type of discussion I think we need," he said in closing.

For more information, visit www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb and see the presentation under Item 9 for the June 21 meeting ("Update on Transportation-Land Use Incentive Programs"). ■

TPB Alphabet Soup

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
TIP	- Transportation Improvement Program
TPB	- Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	- Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Incident Coordination Program Moving Forward

TPB staff reported at the June 21 board meeting that a consultant team led by PB Farradyne, Inc. has been chosen to provide the program implementation management and technical support team for the Regional Transportation Coordination Program (RTCP, previously referred to as "CapCom"). The consultant team will also include additional technical support from Sabra, Wang, and Associates, and Street Smarts, Inc.

The RTCP will facilitate coordination and information sharing during both everyday transportation incidents and regional emergencies.

The RTCP will facilitate coordination and information sharing among the region's transportation agencies, as well as public information dissemination, during both everyday transportation incidents and regional emergencies.

The new program implementation manager for the RTCP will be Mr. Douglas B. Ham of PB Farradyne. Mr. Ham is well-known among transportation practitioners in the region from extensive previous work for the TPB's member agencies. Mr. Ham has over 28 years of professional experience, addressing transportation technology, operations, transit, emergency preparedness, and a range of other issues. Once under contract, Mr. Ham will be the regional point person for RTCP implementation.

The members of this team have significant experience with all major transportation agencies of the Washington region, as well as in technology, operations, and management efforts around the country. This experience includes support for the TRANSCOM organization of metropolitan New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, for the TravInfo

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public information system in the San Francisco Bay Area, and in the traffic management centers of a number of states and major metropolitan areas.

The TPB amended the region's FY 2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on October 19, 2005, to include \$2 million over five years to initiate the RTCP, which is guided by a Steering Committee composed of DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and WMATA. The Steering Committee has been meeting regularly throughout 2005 and 2006.

Through support from DDOT, the Steering Committee worked with experts from the U.S. Department of Transportation's research arm, the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, on steps toward RTCP development. Volpe drafted a program management plan with timelines and cost estimates, a mission needs statement, and a Steering Committee charter. The management plan addressed technological issues, operating procedures and information sharing issues for the regional program. A critical component of the Volpe effort was increased buy-in gained from the region's key transportation operations management personnel on the RTCP concept.

At its December 21, 2005 meeting, the TPB endorsed contracting for a program manager through COG/TPB, to work with Steering Committee member agencies on moving the regional coordination program forward. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a "Program Implementation Manager and Technical Support Team" was issued by COG/TPB in March. The Steering Committee and staff selected a winning team on May 22.

The contract is being accomplished through SAFETEA-LU transportation funding. It does not use Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funds, and is not affected by recently announced cuts in the DHS Urban Area Security Initiative program.

For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see Item 8 under the June 21 agenda. ■

July Agenda

The TPB's July 19 agenda will include the following items:

- Update on options for strengthening the linkages between transportation and land use planning in the region.
- Approval of inclusion of the project to realign and widen a segment of Billingsley Road in Charles County in the 2006 CLRP and FY 2007-2012 TIP (see article on page 5).
- Approval of Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region. To view the plan, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation.
- Establishment of a task force to develop the coordinated plan for human service transportation for the region, and approval of steps for the TPB to become the designated recipient for the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs.
- Presentation of recipients of the 2006 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards.
- Briefing on the draft financial analysis for the 2006 CLRP.
- Briefing on the draft report "An Update on the National Capital Region's Transportation Capital Funding Needs."
- Briefing on the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee's report "Transportation Issues for Low-Income Populations: Findings and Recommendations." ■

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Charles County Road Proposed for Regional Plan

Construction of the final portions of the Cross County Connector in Charles County, Maryland, is being advanced as a last-minute addition to the TPB's 2006 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

At its June 21 meeting, the TPB received notice of Charles County's request to include the project in the CLRP and the associated air quality conformity analysis. The project comprises phases five through seven of a plan for a complete east-west linkage across the county. It will involve the construction of a four-lane roadway on or parallel to the alignment of the existing Billingsley Road, stretching from Middletown Road northeast of the city of La Plata to Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway) near the Potomac River.

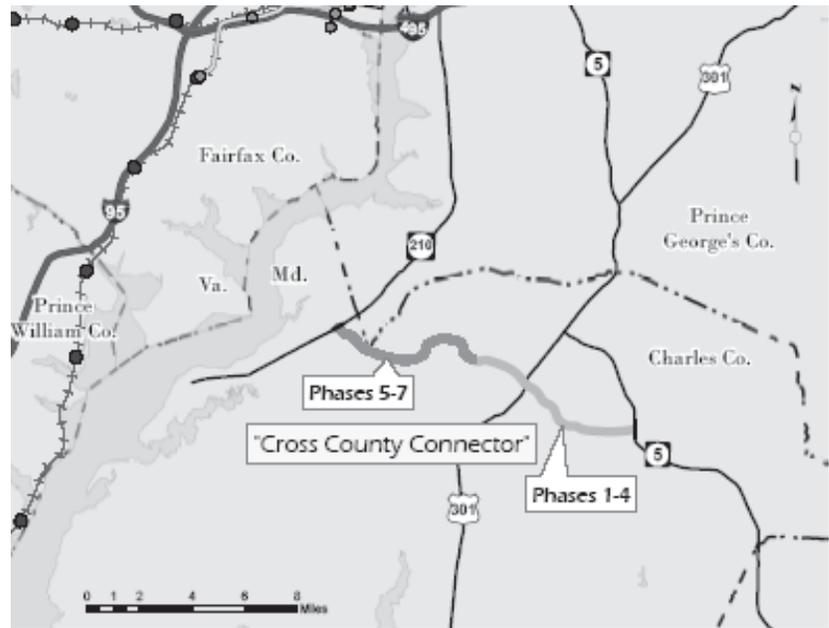
Four of the seven stages of the highway are already complete, and a new stage of the highway is scheduled to be completed each year beginning with the easternmost section in 2007, with the connection to Route 210 and full completion of the project in 2009. The project will include a ten-foot-wide multi-use trail separated from the roadway. The final three portions together carry a budget of \$33.7 million, all of which is to be funded by Charles County with no state or federal component.

The current Comprehensive Plan for Charles County concentrates 75 percent of future growth within a designated development district, which the Connector highway was designed to serve. County officials anticipate that the new route will help accommodate development at Bryans Road Town Center, a focal point for some of the most intense development within the district.

The Maryland Department of Transportation fully supports the project.

The Connector project was submitted late in this year's CLRP process, partly because county staff had assumed it did not need to be included because it is funded exclusively with local and state dollars. However, because part of the project extends into the new census-designated limits of the St. Charles Urbanized Area, it must be included in the CLRP and air quality conformity analysis.

Ron Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, said inclusion of the project will not require significant additional staff time and resources, and should not delay the TPB



planning cycle.

TPB Chairman Michael Knapp said "normally we don't do exceptions [to project submission deadlines], and this is highly unusual." But he indicated that accommodation of the request would be reasonable given that the St. Charles Urbanized Area only recently joined the TPB and is new to the process.

During the public comment period of the June 21 TPB meeting, Stewart Schwartz of the Coalition for Smarter Growth expressed concern about the project's impact on the Mattawoman Creek and asserted that the environmental assessment conducted for the entire project in 1996 is out-of-date and should be redone. "We believe [the TPB] should be

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presented with other alternatives, and more complete documentation, before this is included or considered for the CLRP," Schwartz said.

Jason Groth, the newly appointed member of the TPB representing Charles County, emphasized that the project in its current form resulted from an extensive study and public participation process dating to the early 1990s. "We thoroughly evaluated alternatives, even the

existing roadway that's out there today, but there were safety issues with the existing road so we're going forward with a new alignment." He also stated that the previous environmental assessment is in the process of being revised.

The TPB will consider inclusion of the project in this year's CLRP and TIP at the July 19 TPB meeting. For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see the July 19 agenda. ■

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Human service transportation programs can range from car loan programs for low-income workers to grants to purchase vehicles for senior centers. SAFETEA-LU provides for three human service transportation programs. The first is a continuation of the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310). The second is an updated Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) (Section 5316), which has changed from an earmarked program to a formula-based distribution. Finally, New Freedom (Section 5317) is a new program that funds new services or projects that go beyond requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

SAFETEA-LU also adds new requirements. The first is that all three programs must now be derived from a "locally developed coordinated plan." Second, JARC and New Freedom program funds require designation of a recipient who is responsible for hosting a competitive bidding process for projects seeking JARC or New Freedom funding.

What organization in the Washington region is equipped to take on these new responsibilities? An ad-hoc group of transit service providers, human service agencies, and representatives from user groups is proposing that the TPB should be made the designated recipient of the JARC and New Freedom funds. If the TPB approves this new role, it would then appoint a task force to develop the coordinated plan and run the competitive selection process.

This type of designation would be new for the TPB. "We have proposed this because nobody else had appeared to step forward and take on this responsibility," said Ron Kirby,

Director of Transportation Planning. "It has to be a neutral agency."

Guidance by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) states that service providers, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), should not be the direct recipient of the funds due to potential conflicts of interest in running the competitive process. The guidance also suggests that a region's MPO can be the designated recipient. (The TPB is a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO responsible for meeting federal planning regulations.) WMATA has already expressed support for the proposed new TPB role. The designation must also be approved by the District's mayor and the governors of Maryland and Virginia.

"The real value here is less in the 'money chase' and new projects," said David Snyder, TPB member from Falls Church, in the discussion following Ms. Klancher's presentation. "Instead the real benefit is making the best use out of existing resources and programs."

The Human Service Transportation Coordination proposal will be an agenda item at the July 19 TPB meeting.

For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see the July 19 agenda. ■



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Rapid Bus Service in DC Added to Region's Plans

It currently takes nearly an hour to ride the bus from Silver Spring to the Archives in Washington. A new rapid bus line along Georgia Avenue will reduce that travel time to between 38 and 45 minutes.

At its meeting on June 21, the Transportation Planning Board added the Georgia Avenue rapid bus service, along with a similar transit line for Pennsylvania Avenue, to the region's

Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and FY2006-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The District Department of

Transportation (DDOT) requested that the projects be included in the CLRP and TIP, as required under federal law.

The Georgia Avenue project is scheduled to begin service this September. It will include between 13 and 15 stops, compared to the 54 stops on the regular local line. The route length is 6.5 miles between Archives and the District of Columbia line. The service will be limited to rush-hour periods with a possible expansion to all-day service in the future.

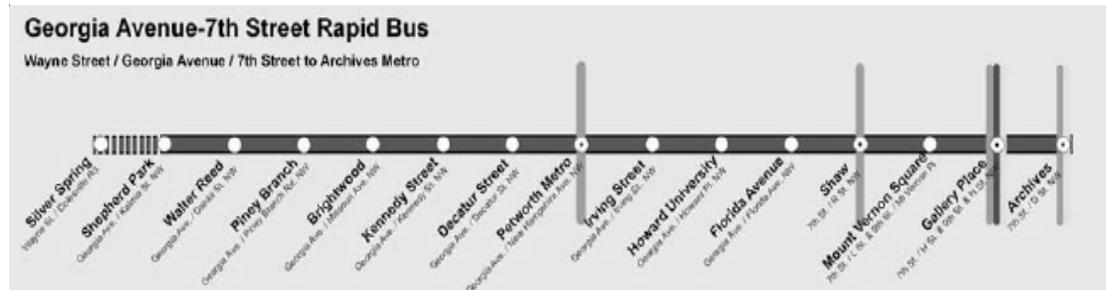
Project funding is \$1.45 million in 2006, and \$1.1 million annually in 2007 and 2008.

The rapid bus line will be equipped with a signal priority system, which extends green lights when buses are behind schedule. Emergency vehicles in the District of Columbia have previously used signal priority technologies, but this will be their first application in the District of Columbia for transit.

Distinctive signage and shelters will give the service a unique "branded" appearance.

Eleven low-floor buses will be painted an easily identifiable color.

The District's second rapid bus project, on Pennsylvania Avenue, will provide a direct connection downtown from Pennsylvania Avenue, SE and Southern Avenue, SE. DDOT has not yet established a startup date for this new service and is still working to determine the number of stops and other details. The Pennsylvania Avenue project funding is \$6.6 million in 2006, and \$1.1 million annually in 2007 and 2008.



Both Pennsylvania and Georgia avenues are among the busiest bus corridors in the Metro system. Currently, local bus service on Pennsylvania Avenue handles approximately 24,000 boardings per day, while the Georgia Avenue line has approximately 22,000 daily boardings.

Rapid bus service would not replace current local bus service, but would, instead, supplement it to provide more frequent service for those traveling in these corridors.

At the meeting on June 21, the TPB also approved increased funding for a project to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow on 18th Street in D.C.'s Adams Morgan neighborhood. Funding for these improvements is now set at \$4.8 million for FY2006 and \$7 million for FY2008.

For more information, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/ and see Item 7 under the June 21 agenda. ■

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 2006

- 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)
- 18 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 18 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 18 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 21 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 27 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 27 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

August 2006

No meetings scheduled

September 2006

- 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 (12:30 pm)
- 13 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 14 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 15 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 19 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 19 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 19 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 19 Commuter Connection Ridematching Committee (2 pm)
- 20 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 22 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 26 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)
- 28 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 28 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

October 2006

- 6 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 6 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 10 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 12 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 13 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 17 Employer Outreach Committee (10 am)
- 18 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 24 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)

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