

Aerial Study Identifies Worsening Congestion

The Washington region's freeway system has become significantly more crowded over the past three years, according to a major new aerial traffic study released on February 15 by the Transportation Planning Board.

During the hour between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m., for example, the number of congested lane miles in the region increased by 64 percent between 2002 and 2005.

The study declared a tie for the worst traffic chokepoint in the region between evening rush hour on the inner loop of the Beltway from I-270 to Connecticut Avenue and the evening rush

hour approach to D.C. on I-395. At these locations, commuters averaged a mere 5 to 10 miles per hour on a regular basis.

"Improved ramps and merge areas connecting major roads along with the construction of High Occupancy Toll or Express Toll Lanes are the best short-term solutions to addressing these traffic chokepoints and bottlenecks," said Ron Kirby, Transportation

See **Aerial Study** on page 2

Top ten
bottlenecks:
Page 2

Recommendations on MetroAccess Released

A report released by the Transportation Planning Board on February 15 identified a number of shortcomings in MetroAccess, the region's public transit service for people with disabilities, and made a series of recommendations for improvement.

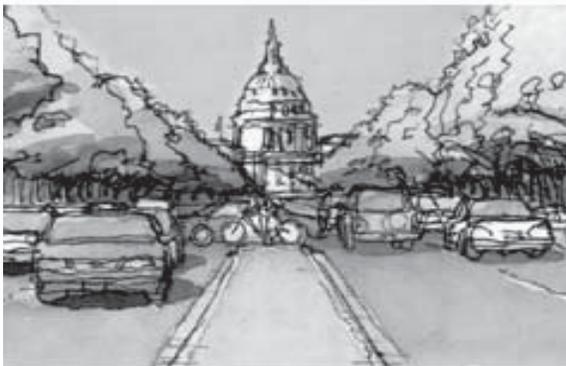
The report, "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region," is the first comprehensive study of the MetroAccess system operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).



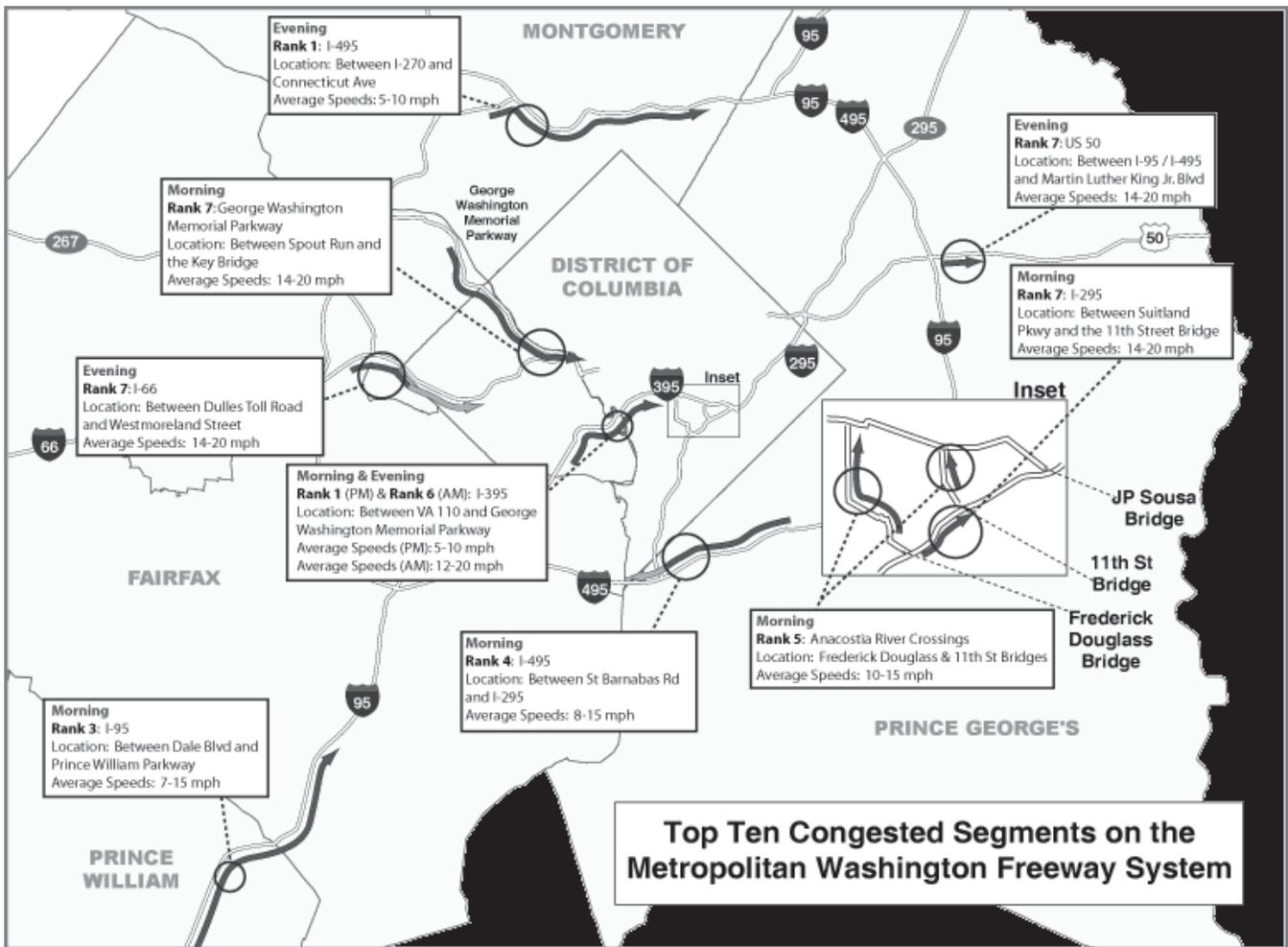
Demand Responsive services, also called paratransit, are provided to people unable to use the bus or rail system because of a disability. These services are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

See **MetroAccess** on page 3

South Capitol Street Project Submitted for 2006 Long-Range Plan



The District of Columbia has submitted a project for this year's long-range plan update to transform South Capitol Street from an urban highway to a grand six-lane boulevard. The project will include a new Frederick Douglas Memorial Bridge. You can read about all this year's project submissions on pages 4-5.



Aerial Study *continued from page 1*

Planning Director at COG. He said the region also must fund transit adequately and continue to promote ridesharing and telecommuting.

Some locations in the outer suburbs such as Westbound I-66 (4:30 to 5:30 p.m.) from Lee Hwy to Sudley Road and Southbound I-95 (4:30 to 5:30 p.m.) from Dumfries Boulevard to Russell Road experienced the most significant changes between 2002 and 2005 – both spots doubled in congestion.

On a more positive note, the study found some examples where highway upgrades added

capacity and improved traffic flow, such as the Beltway from I-270 to the Dulles Toll Road, US 50 Westbound in Maryland and the Springfield Interchange.

TPB studies show that shifting more growth to the eastern half of the Washington region would help reduce the imbalances that create chokepoints. For example, the major chokepoint heading into D.C. over the 14th Street Bridge during evening rush hour is largely caused by commuters heading back home from jobs in the western half of the region.

Over 80,000 aerial photographs were taken of the region’s 300 mile freeway system for the study. It was first conducted in 1993 and has been repeated every three years. ■

Improved ramps and merge areas provided relief to some bottlenecks.

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Other February Items

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

- **Extension of public comment period** for the project submissions for the 2006 Constrained Long-Range Plan. Updated project submission information will be released at the March 9 meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and the extended public comment period will close on April 10. Read more about this year's project submissions on pages 5-6.
- Briefing on improvements in **public information and public involvement**. TPB staff is planning a number of activities to educate community leaders, make public information more accessible, and make public input more useful. These improvements are consistent with recommendations presented in January by the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee. ■

Upcoming Agenda

The TPB's March agenda will include:

- Briefings on the **2006 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP)**, including:
 - The draft **financial analysis** for this year's CLRP update;
 - The **project submissions** for this year's CLRP and the FY 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and
 - The revised scope of work for the **air quality conformity assessment** for the CLRP and TIP.
- Approvals related to the TPB's **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**. The UPWP is the TPB's annual work program. The board will be asked to approve the FY2007 UPWP, which begins in July, along with carryover funding from the current UPWP.
- Briefing on the draft FY 2007 **Commuter Connections Work Program**.
- Update on activities to identify **dedicated funding** for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). ■

MetroAccess *continued from page 1*

An active study steering committee comprising a wide range of stakeholders guided the study. Committee participants included persons with disabilities, the WMATA Office of MetroAccess and local paratransit providers and human service agencies. At its meeting on February 15, the TPB approved transmission of the report to WMATA.

"The purpose of this study is to review innovative practices and to provide recommendations to the Metro Board," said

Kathryn Porter, chair of the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee.

"Some of the problems becoming evident now are actually manifestations of longer term issues. We hope

the board will take a look at the recommendations we're making and really take them into consideration."

The report identifies shortcomings in existing paratransit services from the perspective of customers, human service agencies, and transportation providers. They include:

- Poor communication with customers;
- Late pick-ups and excessively long travel times;
- No same-day service;
- Lack of wheelchair-accessible cabs;
- Inadequate handling of customer complaints.

The TPB's Access for All Advisory Committee is recommending that MetroAccess upgrade its informational resources, improve handling of customer complaints, develop a users group, provide same-day taxi service to users, and have an agency independent of Metro conduct on-going reviews.

The advisory committee requested the study in 2004 in response to concerns raised by MetroAccess customers over the program's reliability.

To download a copy of the full report, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/afa. ■



MetroAccess service is currently "curb-to-curb" but some customers need door-to-door service.

New Projects Submitted for 2006 Long-Range Plan

The District of Columbia has submitted the only big-ticket new projects for this year's update to TPB's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). The D.C. projects, which are all linked to the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, include a major redevelopment of South Capitol Street, replacement of the 11th Street Bridge and construction of the first phase of the Anacostia Streetcar.

At its meeting on April 19, the TPB will be asked to approve the project submissions for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis for the CLRP and the FY 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The public comment period on the project submissions has been extended to April 10.

Information about the CLRP development process, including directions on how to make public comments, can be found in the box on page 5. Project descriptions are provided below.

Projects Proposed for Construction

1. South Capitol St Corridor with Frederick Douglas Memorial Bridge Improvements

Between Independence Ave. & MLK, Jr. Blvd.

Convert South Capitol Street from an urban highway to a grand six-lane boulevard. Construct a newly aligned, six-lane Frederick Douglas Bridge. **Length:** 3.5 miles.

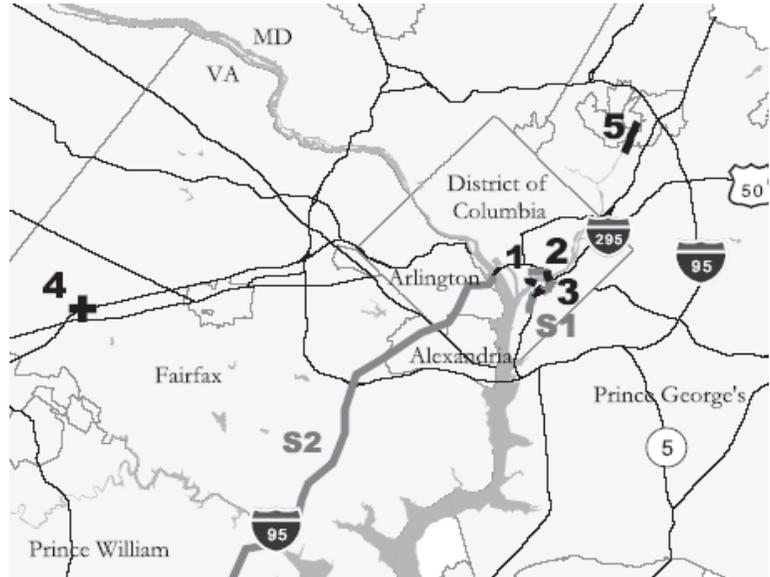
Cost: \$625 million. **Completion:** 2015

2. 11th St Bridges & Interchange Reconstruction

Between the Anacostia Freeway & Southeast Freeway

Replace and reconfigure the 11th Street Bridges. One bridge would be limited to freeway traffic, carrying four lanes in each direction. The second bridge would carry local traffic on two lanes in each direction. New ramps east of the river would connect both directions of the Anacostia Freeway with each span. **Length:** 1 mile

Cost: \$377 million. **Completion:** 2011.



3. Anacostia Streetcar Project

Phase I: From Firth Sterling & South Capitol St. to Howard Rd. & MLK, Jr. Ave.

Build the first phase of the streetcar line. This project replaces the Anacostia Demonstration Rail Line (the CSX Shepard Branch Light Rail Project) previously in the CLRP. The new project contains four phases, but only the first phase is included for construction in the 2006 CLRP. Phases II, III and IV are included for study (see S1 on page 5).

Length: Approximately ½ mile (Phase I only)

Cost: \$21 million **Completion:** 2011.

4. Upgrade VA 28 at I-66 Interchange

Between VA 28/I-66 Interchange & Braddock/Walney Rds

Eliminate turn movements and implement signal timing/phasing changes near the interchange of VA 28 and I-66 at three locations: 1) VA28 and Braddock/Walney Road; 2) VA 28 and ramps to westbound I-66, and 3) VA 28 and ramps from eastbound I-66. **Length:** Operational improvements within a half-mile area.

Cost: \$750,000. **Completion:** 2008.

5. Widen MD 201, Kenilworth Avenue

Between River Road and Pontiac Street

Widen Kenilworth Avenue from 4 to 6 lanes in the vicinity of Greenbelt Park. **Length:** 2 miles.

Cost: \$3 million. **Completion:** 2010.

Quick Facts: Project Submissions for the Long-Range Plan

- **What is the CLRP and TIP?** The Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) includes all the major transportation projects that the region anticipates can be funded and built between now and 2030. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a six-year, more detailed subset of the CLRP. All regionally significant projects must be included in the CLRP and TIP in order to receive federal funding.
- **How does the CLRP update process begin?** Every year, the transportation implementing agencies—including the state DOTs, local governments and WMATA—submit their new projects for the CLRP and TIP. The TPB releases these project submissions for public comment before they are approved for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis that will be conducted for the new CLRP/TIP.
- **How long is this public comment period?** The 2006 project submissions were first released for public comment on February 9. However, because information on the projects was not complete, the TPB decided at its meeting on February 15 to extend the comment period. The TPB will release updated project submission information on March 9 and the extended public comment period will close on April 10. The TPB is scheduled on April 19 to approve the project submissions for inclusion in the CLRP air quality conformity analysis.
- **What is the air quality conformity analysis?** The conformity analysis produces forecasts of vehicle emission levels that are anticipated under the future transportation network that is laid out in the CLRP, including new projects and projects already in the plan. As part of the final approval of the CLRP and TIP, the TPB must approve an air quality conformity determination showing that forecasted emissions will not exceed ceilings (“mobile emissions budgets”) established in the region’s air quality improvement plan.
- **When will the TPB approve the final 2006 CLRP and TIP?** The 2006 CLRP and the new TIP, along with the air quality conformity determination, are scheduled for final approval in October.
- **How can I submit comments on the project submissions?** The easiest way is to submit the comments online at www.mwco.org/transportation/public. You can also send your comments by mail or fax, record your message on the TPB’s public comment telephone line at 202-962-3262, or present a statement in person at the beginning of each TPB meeting. Call 202-962-3315 to sign up to make a public comment in person.

Proposed New Studies

S1. Anacostia Streetcar Project (Phases II-IV)

Phase II: Firth Sterling and South Capitol Street to Malcolm X Avenue

Phase III: Howard Road and MLK, Jr., Avenue to Good Hope Road and Minnesota Avenue

Phase IV: MLK, Jr. Avenue over the 11th Street Bridge on M Street, SE to South Capitol Street.

Phases II-IV of this project are included for study in the 2006 CLRP, while Phase I is included for construction (see description at left). This project replaces the Anacostia Demonstration Rail Line (the CSX Shepard Branch Light Rail Project) previously in the CLRP. **Length:** Approximately 4 miles (all four phases, including half-mile in Phase I).

Completion: 2011. **Cost:** \$3 million

S2. Study Proposal to Build and Operate HOV/HOT Lanes on I-95/I-395

Between the Virginia state line and the I-95 Massaponax exit in Spotsylvania County

The CLRP already includes the extension of HOV lanes from Quantico Creek to the Stafford County line and the re-striping to 3 lanes of existing HOV lanes from the D.C. line to Quantico Creek. The proposed change for the 2006 CLRP would provide for the development of environmental documents, consistent with federal (NEPA) and state requirements, for a proposal to build high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes proposed by the private sector under Virginia’s Public/Private Transportation Act (PPTA). **Length:** 47 miles. **Completion:** 2007. **Cost:** \$380,000.

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).

March 2006

- 3 TPB Technical Committee (9 am)
- 3 TPB Steering Committee (noon)
- 8 Bike to Work Day Steering Committee (10 am)
- 9 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 10 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 14 Commuter Operation Center Subcommittee (10 am)
- 14 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 14 Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Meeting (12:30 pm)
- 15 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 17 Travel Forecasting Subcommittee (9:30 am)
- 21 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 23 Aviation Technical Subcommittee (10:30 am)
- 28 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)

April 2006

- 4 Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Marketing Group (10 am)
- 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 Employer Outreach Ad-Hoc Group (10 am)
- 18 Commuter Connections High Tech Ad-Hoc Group (noon)
- 19 Transportation Planning Board (noon)**
- 25 Travel Management Subcommittee (9 am)

May 2006

- 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)
- 11 TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (6 pm)
- 12 Joint Technical Working Group for the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (noon)
- 16 Commuter Connections Subcommittee (noon)
- 16 Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee (1 pm)
- 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)
- 25 TPB Access for All Advisory Committee (noon)

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