



Peer Exchanges

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– Peer Roundtable Report –

“Positioning Rail Transit in Sustainable Regional Transportation Plans and Programs”

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Roundtable Host:	American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Rail Conference
Roundtable Participants:	Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Headquarters Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Portland Metro (Metro) Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Port Authority of Alleghany County (Port Authority) Sound Transit Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)

The following report documents the presentations and discussions of an afternoon roundtable on “Positioning Rail Transit in Sustainable Regional Transportation Plans and Programs” held in conjunction with the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) Annual Rail Conference in Chicago, Illinois. The roundtable was sponsored by the [Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Program](#), which is jointly funded by the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) and [Federal Transit Administration](#) (FTA). The report includes the following sections:

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I. Background and Goals

The “Positioning Rail Transit in Sustainable Regional Transportation Plans and Programs” roundtable was part of an ongoing dialogue on “Transit at the Table” that identifies opportunities for transit agencies to make more effective partners in the regional transportation planning process. Its goals were to provide an overview of emerging Federal policy and research, and to highlight the collaborative work of transit agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) from around the country to advance sustainability. Key questions asked of panel speakers included:

- How can transit agencies work with MPOs to create enhanced options for transit and other sustainable transportation choices in regional transportation plans and programs?
- What are the opportunities (and barriers) for more and better collaboration between transit agencies and MPOs?
- How does transit investment support sustainable regional development?
- How can transit agencies and MPOs develop and use outcome-based performance measures to help prioritize projects and advance sustainable, multi-modal regional development solutions?

Approximately 30 people attended the session. Diana C. Mendes, the chair of APTA’s Policy and Planning Committee and Senior Vice President of AECOM, served as facilitator for the event. Roundtable panelists were:

- Charles R. Goodman, Director, Office of Systems Planning, FTA
- Paul N. Bay, Professional Engineer (PE), Transportation Consultant
- Jesse A. Elam, Senior Planner, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- Richard Brandman, Oregon Director, Columbia River Crossing Project, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Tony R. Mendoza, Transit Project Analysis Manager, Portland Metro
- David E. Wohlwill, Manager of Extended Range Planning, Port Authority of Allegheny County (Port Authority)
- Gregory A. Walker, Policy and Planning Officer, Sound Transit
- Nat Bottigheimer, Assistant General Manager, Planning and Joint Development, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

II. Key Findings

The roundtable presentations and discussion identified numerous ideas and possibilities for transit agencies to be more proactive partners in regional transportation decision-making and support sustainable development goals in their work. Key actions for transit agencies to take are:

Outreach and Relationship Building

- Participate actively in MPO Boards and committees.
- Attend relevant agency and committee meetings and hearings even if you are not on the agenda and ask to be added to the speaker list to communicate your message.
- Provide leadership to foster regional awareness and dialogue on smart growth issues and transit-oriented development (TOD).

Policy Development

- Work with MPOs to get TOD supportive goals, objectives, and policies in the long-range transportation plan (LRTP).
- Work with MPOs to create and adopt multimodal performance measures (e.g., multimodal level of service) for use in the LRTP, as well as project prioritization and selection in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Work with MPOs to create and adopt environmental performance measures (e.g., green house gas reduction) for use in the LRTP, as well as project prioritization and selection in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Implementation

- Collaborate with MPOs and other regional stakeholders on technical studies that highlight specific opportunities for smart growth and TOD in your region.

Education and Technical Assistance

- Position your agency as a technical resource for MPO planners on smart growth and TOD planning and financing.
- Propose studies on topics supporting regional transit development or coordination between transit, land-use, and economic development for inclusion in MPOs' Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP).

III. Summary of Discussions

A. Federal Policy Context: "Transit at (and on) the Table" for Sustainable Plans and Programs

Charlie Goodman, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Planning

In order for transit to play a meaningful role in creating sustainable transportation systems, the FTA believes that transit agencies have to become more meaningful and pro-active partners in the Federal transportation planning and programming process. The premise is that in order to get transit *on* the table (i.e., included in plans, funded, and built), transit agencies have to make their way *to* the table and actively participate in decision-making. Recognizing that this is not a traditional role for most transit agencies nationwide, the FTA has sponsored a series of studies called "Transit at the Table" that identify ways for transit agencies to address this challenge. Two studies are already complete and a third is currently underway:

- [Transit at the Table 1](#) focused on how transit agencies in larger metropolitan areas (more than 200,000 in population) could be more effective partners with MPOs in the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process.
- **Transit at the Table 2** focused on how transit agencies in smaller metropolitan areas (populations between 50,000 and 200,000) could be more effective partners with MPOs in the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process. (*Not available yet online*)
- **Transit at the Table 3** will explore how transit agencies in non-urbanized and rural areas can be more effective partners with state departments of transportation (state DOT) in the statewide transportation planning and programming process. (*Currently in development – not available yet online*)

Through interviews with key transit agency, MPO, and state DOT staff, each report provides anecdotes and testimonials on the:

- Barriers transit agencies often face to full and effective participation in the MPO planning process.
- Strategies used to overcome these barriers.
- Benefits realized by transit agencies that successfully made their way “to the table.”

An overarching theme of the series is the notion that “you have to play to win” – transit agencies will not achieve desired outcomes while operating and planning in isolation. Multi-stakeholder and multi-sector collaboration is key. (*see Appendix B for a complete list of key findings*)

Growing recognition of the importance of multi-sector collaboration was recently highlighted at a landmark [hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs July 16, 2009](#) to announce the creation of an *Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities* between the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The goal of the Partnership will be to “help improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide.” At the hearing, the Secretaries of DOT and HUD and the EPA Administrator outlined six guiding “livability principles” they will use to coordinate Federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments in support of regional comprehensive planning:

1. *Provide more transportation choices.* Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices in order to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nations' dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.
2. *Promote equitable, affordable housing.* Expand location and energy efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
3. *Increase economic competitiveness.* Enhance economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expand business access to markets.
4. *Support existing communities.* Target Federal funding toward existing communities to increase community revitalization, the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
5. *Leverage Federal investment.* Cooperatively align Federal policies and funding to remove barriers, leverage funding and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth.
6. *Value communities and neighborhoods.* Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods - rural, urban or suburban.

Mr. Goodman shared his excitement about the Sustainable Communities Partnership and noted that transit and TOD support all six of its guiding principles. He noted that in the proposed 2010 Appropriations Bill for HUD, there is talk of creating a discretionary grant program to fund integrated transportation, land-use, and economic development planning at the local and regional level. It has been mentioned that between \$100 and \$150 million dollars in discretionary grants may be available to communities nationwide to create integrated plans that develop innovative

transportation, housing, land-use, economic development, and energy strategies to address congestion and transportation related greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Goodman noted that transit planning should play an important role in this type of integrated planning. He explained that the case studies generated by initial grantees could be used during the reauthorization of the Federal transportation bill to create new programs and funding opportunities within DOT. He also stressed the importance of “scaling up” and engaging land-use development at the regional level to develop transit networks – rather than individual projects – as a means to promote truly “sustainable” regional development outcomes. One opportunity for transit agencies to do this is to work proactively with MPOs to create a tighter connection between transportation investments and surrounding land-uses by promoting TOD in regional long-range comprehensive plans.

Comprehensive planning has not recently been a MPO role or responsibility. Yet some MPOs are now looking beyond a singular focus on transportation to develop collaborative land-use visions that help to steer transportation investments and more effectively integrate transportation and land use (e.g., [San Diego](#), [Seattle](#)). As such, there may be growing opportunities for transit agencies to collaborate with MPOs in support of comprehensive planning efforts. To leverage this opportunity, the National Transit Institute (NTI) has recently developed a 2-day course called [Transit-Oriented Development and Joint Development](#). The course is specifically designed for MPO and state DOT planners to build their capacity to engage in land-use and development issues through comprehensive planning, as well as their long-range transportation plans.

Lastly, Mr. Goodman recommended Reconnecting America’s online [Center for Transit Oriented Development \(CTOD\)](#) as an excellent resource for transit and MPO planners, with numerous free reports and information on how to promote TOD in regional transportation and comprehensive planning processes.

B. New Report: “The Role of Transit Agencies in Regional Transportation Planning Processes”

Paul N. Bay, PE, Transportation Consultant and Principal Investigator

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) recently completed a report on “The Role of Transit Agencies in the Regional Transportation Planning Process” that provides interesting comparative information and follow-up to the FTA’s “Transit at the Table” studies. The research team looked at the 75 largest metropolitan regions in the country and conducted in-depth, confidential interviews with transit system and MPO managers in 12 case study regions. Mr. Bay noted that interviewees gave open and honest responses that reflected both challenges and opportunities for regional collaboration.

Major findings of the study were:

- Improvements to regional planning processes are greatly needed, and both transit agencies and MPOs have a role to play in making these improvements.
 - *Transit agencies* must learn how to:
 - Partner with MPOs and other regional agencies.
 - Help achieve a shared vision for growth.
 - Actively participate in *all* regional planning decisions, not just transit.
 - Provide leadership, and commit management and technical resources to the planning process.
 - *MPOs* must learn how to:
 - Collaborate with local governments, state DOTs, transit agencies, businesses and other interests.

- Conduct scenario planning to achieve a shared vision for regional growth.
 - Fix institutional and governance barriers to collaboration.
 - Build technical capacity for regional partners to engage in regional collaboration.
- Successful regions have clear agency missions and effective leadership. Characteristics of successful regions include:
 - Shared regional vision for economic development, land-use, growth management, and transportation development.
 - Effective partnerships among key agencies, evidenced by a high degree of mutual trust.
 - Transit-specific financial plans.
 - State-of-the-art planning methodologies used from visioning and planning to programming and project selection.
- There are huge variations in regional governance and decision-making across the U.S., which powerfully shape the nature and degree of collaboration that is possible.
 - Uncertainty about how MPO structures and responsibilities may change under reauthorization of the Federal transportation bill has made some transit managers unsure of how to proceed with regional collaboration.
 - Multi-state metropolitan regions have added complexity to governance and decision-making structures, which pose special challenges for collaboration.
- Transit agencies face seven common challenges to regional collaboration in regional transportation planning:
 - Land use collaboration is difficult due to fragmented, local control.
 - MPOs are still dominated by highway interests.
 - Truly multimodal planning is rare.
 - Region-wide environmental planning is rare.
 - MPO policy board structure is important and highly varied nationwide.
 - Multi-state metropolitan regions face special and unique challenges.

C. Panelist Case Studies: Regional Transit & MPO Collaboration Stories from Around the Nation

Following the Federal policy context offered by Charles Goodman and the summary of Paul Bay's TCRP research, the remaining panelists – who represented both planning agencies and transit agencies – offered brief case studies of the work taking place in their own regions to increase inter-agency collaboration and successfully integrate transit systems planning in support of sustainable regional development goals.

1. Chicago's *Go to 2040* Plan

Jesse Elam, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is a regional agency whose mission is to integrate land use and transportation in the 7-county Chicago region. CMAP serves as the Chicago region's MPO as well as the region's Planning Commission, so its planning charge spans a variety of issues:

- Transportation
- Land Use
- Economic and Community Development
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Housing
- Human Services

CMAP is currently preparing a long-range comprehensive plan, [Go to 2040](#), which will also function as the RTP. *Go to 2040* is a scenario-based planning exercise that develops three growth options (respectively called *Reinvest*, *Preserve*, *Innovate*), plus a baseline trend, that are used as a comparative framework for evaluating projects and making investment decisions.

Scenario One, "Reinvest," includes significant transit service expansion and a focus on TOD. The other scenarios under consideration do not include the same level of transit investment. Thus, when all the scenarios are modeled and compared they reveal how different packages of investment will impact regional growth and development in different ways. CMAP is running the regional travel demand model for each scenario and analyzing them to determine their impacts on air quality conformity as well. Mr. Elam noted that by taking a technical, analytical approach to decision-making such as scenario planning, CMAP is able to "sell" the benefits of different investment packages to the public objectively to gain its support and buy-in. All four scenarios are currently in public review and comment, and CMAP expects to choose a "preferred" scenario by the end of 2009.

Another distinguishing feature of the *Go to 2040* plan is its use of indicators/performance measures. CMAP is using a variety of indicators to:

- Assess the performance of alternate scenarios
- Evaluate major capital investments (at the project level)
- Track regional performance over time

CMAP's indicators include a number of measures that support sustainability goals, such as:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Provision
- Mode Share (Travel by Mode)
- Air Quality
- Energy Consumption and Green House Gas Emissions
- Preservation of Natural Resources and Land Consumption
- Support for Infill Development and Existing Densely-Developed Areas
- Mutual Consistency Between Regional and Sub-Regional Land Use and Transportation Plans

One indication that transit is "at the table" in Chicago is that transit providers are included as members and decisionmakers on the MPO Policy Board.

2. Portland's High Capacity Transit System Plan

Tony R. Mendoza, Portland Metro

Richard Brandman, Oregon DOT

There is a rich history of “transit at the table” in Portland. The Portland region’s MPO, Metro, conducts long-range transit studies and works closely with TriMet (the region’s major transit operator) to submit funding applications to the New Starts program and oversee environmental review. Mr. Brandman joked that in Portland, contrary to most parts of the country, it’s the state DOT that wants a better seat at the table to get its interests heard. There are a number of reasons for the Portland region’s success at pro-active transit collaboration. One piece comes from a long history of transportation and land use coordination, which was spurred by a state law requiring the establishment of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) in all metropolitan areas during the 1970s.

Another stems from the unique charter of Metro itself, which is the only directly elected regional government in the United States. Metro serves as the region’s MPO, but was also granted land use authority by the Governor in the 1970s, including the power to delineate and manage Portland’s UGB. Many MPOs set density targets in their plans, but what distinguishes Metro is the ability to enforce those targets and use them to proactively create transit-supportive land uses region-wide.

Metro is currently updating its RTP and undertaking a scenario planning effort similar to CMAP’s effort in Chicago. Scenario planning allows Metro to analyze the impacts of different packages of major investments (e.g., major focus on highways versus transit versus bike/ped) and see how they impact and influence regional growth over the next 30-40 years. The Metro Council directed staff to develop and use outcome-based performance measures that could evaluate investments relative to the broad sustainability goals adopted for the region, which are to:

- Sustain economic competitiveness.
- Create vibrant walkable communities.
- Provide safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance quality of life.
- Minimize regional contributions to global warming.
- Enjoy clean air, water, and ecosystems for current and future generations.
- Ensure the benefits and burdens of investments are shared throughout the region.

Metro staff modeled four investment scenarios outlined in the Draft RTP: highways, connections, transportation system management (TSM) strategies, and high-capacity transit (HCT). Analysis revealed that the alternative emphasizing a HCT system investment would lead to the most “livable” region. Staff then set to work developing criteria that could be used to evaluate individual HCT corridors and projects. After a year of working through Metro’s policy and advisory committees, 25 project evaluation criteria were adopted and applied to 55 potential HCT corridors. The 55 corridors were narrowed to 16 and then prioritized for investment based on the evaluation criteria results. The final HCT system plan will be adopted through the RTP in fall/winter of 2009 after public review and comment is complete.

Mr. Mendoza noted that high capacity transit planning is “how everything comes together” in Portland’s regional transportation planning approach. He also noted that transit ridership is used as a key indicator in Metro’s evaluation criteria, because increased ridership serves as a proxy for hard to measure outcomes like sustainability and livability that Metro wants to support.

Mr. Mendoza explained that Metro is now focusing on leveraging HCT investments to encourage local jurisdictions to make land use decisions and walk/bike connections to transit corridors. In this vein, Mr. Brandman further explained that Metro planners and TriMet staff are working with members of the local business community to “go beyond TOD and do DOT – Development Oriented Transit” in which they engage individual property owners and developers in close

proximity to the areas targeted for transit expansion to ensure that development will occur along those corridors.

The result of Portland's pro-active transit-supportive approach is a reduction in automobile travel and dramatic increase in transit usage, as well as bicycle and pedestrian trips. Planners are also finding that regional trip lengths are lowering over time as a result, which further supports walking, biking, and transit as modes of choice.

3. Oregon DOT's Multimodal Columbia River Crossing Project

Richard Brandman, Oregon DOT

After many years directing the light rail planning for Metro in Portland Mr. Brandman is now working with the Oregon DOT (ODOT) to oversee the [Columbia River Crossing](#) project. The Columbia River Crossing is a \$4 billion bridge, transit, and highway improvement project to replace five miles of Interstate-5 that crosses the Columbia River between Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. The current river crossing faces significant congestion and goods movement challenges and offers limited options for transit, walking, and biking. Mr. Brandman is working to make the project truly multimodal by introducing light rail across the bridge (which would bring modern light rail service from Portland into Vancouver for the first time) and by providing great bike and pedestrian amenities.

There are a number of challenges facing the project, due not only to its magnitude but also the multimodal focus and the differing interests and constituents on either side of the bridge span. Some people are concerned there will be too many highway lanes. Others worry about the introduction of light-rail for the first time and what that means for their communities. The Bike/Pedestrian advocacy community worries that its needs and interests will be left behind due to the focus on highway, light-rail, and freight.

ODOT is looking for performance measures to help set outcome targets for the project and shape the methods that will be used to achieve them. By using performance measures to frame goals and decision-making, ODOT hopes to quell worries on all sides and ensure that a balanced, multimodal project results. Currently, performance measures in the areas of economic development, mobility, safety, and health are being examined and assessed for relevance to the project. Mr. Brandman noted that identifying the "right" performance measures for a project of this kind is a challenge, however, because most measures in use today are designed to distinguish among project types rather than foster truly multimodal outcomes.

4. Transit Agency and MPO Collaboration in Pittsburgh

David Wohlwill, Port Authority of Alleghany County

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the MPO for the 10-county Pittsburgh region. The Port Authority of Alleghany County (Port Authority) is the major transit operator in the region, serving the City of Pittsburgh and surrounding county. Each of the surrounding counties in SPC's planning region has its own countywide transit provider.

Mr. Wohlwill shared information about several key milestones in the Port Authority's recent history of collaborating with the SPC to support and promote TOD in the Pittsburgh region.

- *Parkway West Multi-Modal Corridor Study* – This 1989 study explored a link between downtown Pittsburgh and the airport. It led to the creation of the West Busway, which opened in 2000 and uses an abandoned railroad right of way (ROW).
- [Regional Transit Visioning Study](#) – This 2006 study laid out an ambitious vision for the future of transit (including light-rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, fixed-route bus service, and other transit services and amenities) that would support growth and connect people to recreation, economic and employment centers throughout the Pittsburgh

region. It was a collaborative effort among the Port Authority, the SPC and transit providers in the region.

The *Regional Transit Vision* was a scenario-based exercise (similar to RTP scenario planning efforts in Chicago and Portland) that analyzed the impacts of focused growth, land use planning, and transportation coordination on regional transit potential and then compared results to a baseline trend. It demonstrated that by taking a more active role in land use planning and transportation coordination, the demand for transit in Pittsburgh could be much greater than it would be otherwise. The *Regional Transit Vision* also led to several more focused studies aimed at identifying specific corridors or areas for transit improvement and TOD in and around Pittsburgh

- The *Airport Multimodal Major Investment Study* identified light-rail and bus rapid transit improvements, as well as TOD opportunities in the communities already served along the West Busway corridor.
- The *Eastern Corridor Transit Study* was a collaboration among the Port Authority, SPC, and the Westmoreland County Transit Authority (WCTA). It evaluated a set of commuter rail, light rail and bus rapid transit alternatives in the Eastern Sector of the region extending from downtown Pittsburgh to Westmoreland County. It also considered various “nodes” (urban center, brownfield site, suburban center, outlying county area) as prototypes for development around transit stations.
- A brochure “Creating Transit-Oriented Communities” that defines TOD, describes the benefits of TOD, and explains how successful TODs are created. The brochure is now being distributed to local governments, developers, and citizens to encourage greater knowledge and awareness of TOD in the Pittsburgh region.

The Port Authority is now focusing efforts on leveraging existing assets to facilitate TOD. Its current major planning initiative is a Transit Development Plan to restructure its existing bus network for a more efficient and effective system within available financial resources.

In recent years, the SPC, Allegheny County, the city of Pittsburgh, and WCTA have assumed lead roles in regional transit planning studies. However, the Port Authority is still very much “at the table” in the Pittsburgh region due to the relationships it built over its history of collaboration with the SPC and other regional planning partners.

5. Building a Regional Commuter Transit System in Seattle

Greg Walker, Sound Transit

Sound Transit is the regional high-capacity transit provider in Seattle, Washington. It was created by the state legislature in 1993 and funded by a regional ballot initiative in 1996 to build a system of regional express buses, commuter rail, and light rail that would connect major job and housing centers in the region. Regional light-rail is the last of these components to be completed, with the first segment opened in July 2009.

Sound Transit has been working on the next phase of its long-range vision for high capacity transit in the Seattle region for the last 5 years. These planning efforts culminated in November 2008 when voters approved a second regional ballot initiative ([Sound Transit 2](#)) that will provide nearly \$18 billion over 15 years to fund further regional commuter transit expansion.

Sound Transit sees its work to build a regional transit system and provide Seattle residents with more transportation choices as contributing to a sustainable region in the years to come. Mr. Walker noted the important role that performance measures can play in helping transit agencies demonstrate their contributions to “sustainable” urban and regional development. Three

categories of performance measures were used to evaluate the projects selected for inclusion in the *Sound Transit 2* ballot:

- Environmental
- Economic
- Mobility

Of the three, environmental performance measures lend themselves particularly well to making the case for sustainability. Seattle, for example, is pioneering the use of green house gas (GHG) emissions as a performance measure, and showing how transportation planning decisions (at both the plan and project level) contribute to GHG reductions over time.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the MPO for the 4-county Seattle region. It also serves as the regional planning commission, and as such prepares comprehensive plans as well as LRTPs and TIPs. The PSRC is currently updating its RTP, [Transportation 2040](#). It contains all the projects that were listed on the *Sound Transit 2* ballot and Mr. Walker noted that there is a high degree of collaboration between staff at Sound Transit and PSRC as the RTP update continues.

Despite successful collaboration at the staff planning level, Mr. Walker noted that the biggest obstacle to greater cooperation among agencies to implement sustainable transportation projects and regional rail is the governance structure of regional transportation decision-making. Sound Transit has been successful at gaining voter support for transit at the regional level, yet working with local elected officials (who control land use decisions on a case-by-case basis) to “sell” the benefits of transit projects remains a challenge.

6. Successor Metro System Planning in the Nation’s Capital

Nat Bottigheimer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

The Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) serves the Nation’s Capital area with the second largest rail and fifth largest bus system in the country. Rail and bus ridership is roughly balanced, with 1.5 million rides provided daily. The entire rail system was built between 1976 and 2001, making it one of the younger of the major transit systems in the country.

Mr. Bottigheimer noted that in the past WMATA was focused more on the engineering disciplines needed to build a major transit system than on the planning analysis and relationship-building skills needed for “next generation” transit planning and regional collaboration. That approach worked in the initial years of building the system, but Mr. Bottigheimer noted that as WMATA approaches its design capacity for the rail system, the agency is shifting its focus. Increasingly, WMATA is now seeking opportunities to partner and communicate with other regional stakeholders and decisionmakers to develop transit planning materials that address issues of significance to the region’s key transit service and transit development stakeholders.

Part of the motivation for WMATA’s new direction stems from the realization that relatively few people outside of WMATA staff knew that the Metro system will reach its design capacity by 2025. After this point the system will start to degrade without major new investment. This means that by 2010-2015 WMATA needs to be gearing up and planning the successor system to its current network. Technical analysis will certainly be a major part of that endeavor, but for anything to be implemented WMATA will need to have effective relationships with the agencies and decisionmakers responsible for approval and transit funding. In particular, WMATA will have to work in closer partnership with the Capital region’s MPO, the [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board](#) (TPB).

One of the first steps WMATA has taken with the TPB is to begin strengthening its relationship beyond its current presence as a quasi-voting member of the TBP. WMATA staff have requested a place on TPB meeting agendas and regularly attend to make presentations and keep the TPB

informed of its work. It has taken some time, but Mr. Bottigheimer noted that over the past 5 years more openness and communication between the two agencies is resulting.

A second step towards building more effective working relationships is that WMATA is increasingly reaching out to TPB for assistance with conducting studies, developing analytical tools, and collecting data. For example, WMATA routinely asks TPB to conduct surveys on its behalf, since TPB already does this work and has built significant staff expertise in it. Working with TPB to collect the kind of data that serve WMATA's interests and support WMATA projects has led to more effective partnerships between the two because 1) it generates higher quality data than WMATA's own staff might be able to collect on their own, and 2) it builds TPB staff's knowledge and awareness of WMATA interests, needs, and public support.

As WMATA moves forward with its succession planning effort it is pushing for system-level analysis and asking the question "what is the *network* that will best meet our region's transit needs in 2025" rather than starting from individual projects or corridors. Mr. Bottigheimer acknowledged that it is only by thinking at this larger scale that transit agencies can really demonstrate the benefits of their work in promoting sustainable regional transportation systems.

Mr. Bottigheimer expressed some frustration with the outcome-based performance measures currently being used to project and evaluate transit's contribution to "sustainability." WMATA's air quality analysis, for example, focuses on the number of people riding the Metro each day and develops formulas to estimate the specific air quality impacts of diverting those riders from the roads onto the transit network. This takes one step towards calculating the actual air quality benefits of building more transit, but does not capture all the trips that are diverted from roads because as Metro grows more and more people in the Capital region live in pedestrian-oriented communities where they can walk and bike to work or take transit for non-work trips. Mr. Bottigheimer emphasized the need to develop common sense measures that acknowledge the derived demand created for *all* non-car transportation that result from investments in transit in order to get a more accurate reflection of transit's role in creating sustainable communities.

IV. Appendix

A. Acronyms

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
CTOD	Center for Transit-Oriented Development
DOT	Department of Transportation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	Green House Gases
HCT	High-Capacity Transit
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
PSRC	Puget Sound Regional Council
SPC	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
TBP	National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development

TPCB	Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program
TSM	Transportation System Management
UGB	Urban Growth Boundary
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

B. Summary of “Transit at the Table” Study Findings

Though many of the points raised by *Transit at the Table* interviewees were common both to large and small agencies, smaller transit agencies cited several challenges and strategies for overcoming them that are particular to their experience.

Barriers/Challenges to Overcome for Transit to Participate Effectively in Regional Collaboration

- *Governance* – MPO voting and decision-making structures can be complex and differ significantly from region to region, so it takes commitment to learn the proper channels through which to build relationships and begin participating effectively.
- *Short-term vs. long-term view* – Some transit agencies had difficulty perceiving the importance of being involved in the long-range transportation planning processes rather than directly focusing on the development of the TIP, where projects are actually funded.
- *Lack of understanding about the importance of transit* – MPO Boards may be partial to highway interests or lack enough central city representation to value the viability and role of transit in regional mobility and sustainable development.
- *Inertia* – Organizations that are used to doing things in one way can be resistant to change.
- *Material and human resource constraints* – Lack of dedicated funding, staff turnover/retention, and technical capacity limitations are issues all transit agencies struggle with, particularly in smaller metropolitan areas.
- *Developing expertise in non-traditional relationships* – In rural areas especially, transit agencies may need to develop partnerships with non-traditional agencies or stakeholders to plan, obtain funds, and coordinate services such as state DOTs, tribal governments, and “lifeline” human services transportation providers.

Benefits Gained from Transit’s Participation in Regional Collaboration

- *Influence the identification of transportation issues, policy formation, and funding priorities* – by being an active participant on the MPO Board and/or committees.
- *Elevate transit to a regional transportation priority* – by collaborating with the business community, citizen groups, local officials, and other MPO partners. This can significantly enhance the prospects of any referenda that may be contemplated, and raise the visibility of transit service in your community.
- *Win support for transit-friendly land use policies* – by promoting land use/economic development/transportation integration, leading to MPO policy support for transit-oriented development.
- *Seize new funding opportunities for transit from non-traditional sources or from resources*

otherwise unspent – by making a convincing case for your investment needs to other MPO members and regional partners.

- *Establish an image of transit as indispensable to community well being* – by getting involved in broader issues facing your community, such as homeland security, land use and economic development, and environmental protection.
- *Promote multimodal solutions* – by assuming joint sponsorship of studies with state DOTs, especially if the outcome is a shared highway/transit right-of-way or busway.
- *Get transit on the agenda* – by being involved in MPO committees such as those dealing with policy, air quality, and technical methods.
- *Strengthen your funding prospects for your priorities/shape the transportation future* – by participating fully in preparation of the LRTP and short range TIP.
- *Win support for your investment needs* – by promoting early, open, and objective consideration of transit in regional corridor studies conducted by, or through, the MPO. This can result in support for your capital improvement needs directly, or as a component of another project, such as bus shelters, park-and-ride facilities, signage, sidewalks, or even a special transit right-of-way, when a highway investment alternative is selected.
- *Accelerate delivery of your projects* – by monitoring the status of projects programmed in the TIP to note schedule changes.

C. Key Contacts

Contact: Charles Goodman, Director, Office of Planning
Organization: Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Address: 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20590
Phone: (202) 366-1944
E-Mail: charles.goodman@dot.gov

Contact: Paul Bay
Organization: Transportation Consultant
Address: 2509 263rd Court Northeast, Redmond, Washington 98053
Phone: (425) 985-0296
E-Mail: paulbay@msn.com

Contact: Richard Brandman
Organization: Oregon Director, Columbia River Crossing Project, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Address: 700 Washington Street, Suite 300, Vancouver, Washington 98660
Phone: (360) 816-8865
E-mail: BrandmanR@columbiarivercrossing.com

Contact: Tony R. Mendoza
Organization: Manager, Transit Project Analysis Manager, Portland Metro
Address: 600 Northeast Grand Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232
Phone: (503) 797-1752
Email: Tony.Mendoza@oregonmetro.gov

Contact: Mr. David E. Wohlwill
Organization: Manager of Extended Range Planning, Port Authority of Alleghany County
Address: 345 Sixth Avenue, 3rd Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
Phone: (412) 566-5110
E-mail: dwohlwill@portauthority.org

Contact: Mr. Gregory A. Walker
Organization: Policy and Planning Officer, Sound Transit
Address: 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington 98104-2826
Phone: (206) 398-5070
E-mail: greg.walker@soundtransit.org

Contact: Mr. Nat Bottigheimer
Organization: Director, Planning and Project Development, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Address: 600 5th Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: (202) 962-2730
E-mail: nbottigheimer@wmata.com

Contact: Elizabeth Murphy, TPCB Peer Program Manager
Organization: Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)
Address: 55 Broadway, RVT-22 Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142
Phone: (617) 494-3137
E-Mail: elizabeth.murphy@dot.gov

D. Websites and Useful Links

American Public Transportation Association
<http://www.apta.com/>

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/default.aspx>

Portland Metro
<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/>

Oregon DOT
<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/>

Columbia River Crossing Project
<http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/>

Puget Sound Regional Council
<http://psrc.org/>

Sound Transit
<http://www.soundtransit.org/>

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
<http://www.wmata.com/>

Reconnecting America's Center for Transit-Oriented Development
<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/tod>

Transit at the Table 1
<http://www.planning.dot.gov/Documents/tat.htm>