



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB January 22, 2009

Item # 5

January 9, 2009

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

From: Charles S. Kines, MOVE/Transportation Planning Division  
Daniel K. Hardy, MOVE/Transportation Planning Division

*CK*  
*DKH*

RE: Briefing on OLO Report 2009-6  
*Transportation Demand Management Implementation, Funding, and Governance*

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**Recommendation: Discussion only**

This memorandum and briefing summarizes key findings in the subject report developed by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) and provides the Board with an opportunity to review the full report and offer additional comments. The report is scheduled for discussion at a joint PHED/T&E Committee Meeting on February 2. Staff will participate in that meeting. We do not recommend any formal action by the Planning Board on January 22, but rather ask the Board to support the staff participation in the PHED/T&E meeting with any additional guidance you may offer. We have invited Aron Trombka and Jennifer Renkema, the OLO report authors, to participate in the January 22 worksession.

Attachment A is the final report released by the County Council on December 9, 2008. The executive summary can be found on pages (i) through (iv) and the report's general findings are described on pages 70-88. Planning Director Rollin Stanley's November 20, 2008 letter to the OLO can be found on pages 95-96 of the report.

**Background**

Each year, the County Council asks to OLO to study in detail certain County programs and recommend changes to county policies and programs to strengthen the programs and make them more efficient and effective. OLO Report 2009-6 highlights the County's public policies and programs aimed at encouraging travel options for residents and workers and identified four key recommendations, which we respond to below. Before we discuss the report in detail, we should briefly define transportation demand management.

**What is Transportation Demand Management (TDM)?**

Simply put, TDM is the set of public policy strategies – implemented by both public and private sectors – to provide travel options that reduce and spread demand by travel destination, mode, route, and time of day to most efficiently utilize transportation system

infrastructure and resources. The most commonly described approach, and the focus of the OLO report, is to encourage residents and workers to travel by means other than driving alone. TDM policies emphasize alternative transportation modes (transit, bicycling and walking, as well as telework, carpools/vanpools and other strategies) while discouraging travel by automobile, particularly single occupant vehicles (SOVs). TDM offers numerous benefits to the County, including less traffic congestion, reduced air emissions and improved air quality, and healthier – and arguably more productive – residents and workers.

### **Report Summary**

The study provides a useful compendium of current activities with regard to reducing travel demand in the County, specifically SOV travel. The report's recommendations – if implemented and funded properly – will help further our interest in developing and implementing alternatives to SOV travel in the County. The study recommendations are consistent with the objectives in the Board's 2007 Growth Policy report and will likely mirror recommendations included in the County's Climate Protection Plan being released this month. These separate initiatives have fairly common objectives and research and reporting efforts should be consolidated to the extent possible. We look forward to discussing the relationship between these two efforts with the County Council early next month.

### **Substantive Issues**

We would like to bring to the Board's attention five substantive issues about the report. Several of these issues are also highlighted in Rollin Stanley's November 20<sup>th</sup> letter but we've included them again here for emphasis.

### **Land Use**

First, the report only briefly touches on the important role of land use planning in reducing travel demand. The development of our urban centers and preservation of our agricultural reserve are the result of some four decades of careful land use planning and growth management. As environmental, economic, and fiscal constraints increase, we need to redouble our efforts on directing mixed-use development into areas best served by transit. These efforts will be prominently featured in our 2009 Growth Policy recommendations, part of which will be focused on improving transportation connectivity. The OLO Report only modestly addressed the important link between land use and travel demand, particularly influencing transportation choices and travel behaviors of both residents and workers. We will continue to pursue state-of-the-practice land use planning strategies for reducing SOV travel and ensure they are reflected in master plan analysis and recommendations -- particularly in the County's urban (and urbanizing) areas – as well as part of privately-sponsored traffic mitigation programs as part of subdivision reviews and formal traffic mitigation agreements with developers.

### Parking Management

Second, we concur with the recommendations to focus on unifying the County's various parking policies, programs and related activities. As noted in the report, the development of a policy on public parking supply and pricing will require analysis similar to that proposed in the 2007 Growth Policy, but not funded. We are evaluating private parking supply in our Zoning Ordinance Revision work program, and will likely recommend changes to reduce minimum parking standards for certain zones and areas of the County.

### Status Reports

Third, we support the recommendation to ask the County Executive and the Planning Board to report annually on the County progress on achieving and maintaining master plan commuting goals (see page 23), with a few caveats:

- This annual report should focus on non-auto drive mode share goals (NAMDS) of relevant master plans.
- This effort would complement the Highway Mobility Report, (HMR) which is done biennially, as well as the biennial reports developed by the County's Transportation Management Districts (TMDs). A countywide report on TDM might be completed during the HMR off-year to take advantage of planning staff resources. Both the County and M-NCPPC also periodically collect travel data via other means such as traffic counts and household surveys. Coordinating these reports and deliberately seeking out additional, affordable sources of traveler data would result in a more robust and comprehensive approach in assessing employee commuting patterns, and therefore, would in turn help the County more efficiently and effectively target its limited TDM resources
- A countywide report has funding implications for both the Department of Transportation and the Planning Department to collect and analyze a more robust set of data. Employee commuting data is currently collected primarily via employee surveys and focused largely in the County's four operational transportation management districts (Friendship Heights, Bethesda, North Bethesda, Silver Spring). We should continue these efforts and commit funding for operation of the Greater Shady Grove TMD, a priority integral to the success of the pending Gaithersburg West Master Plan.

### Increased Technology

Fourth, we suggest the County also focus more on technology approaches to address commuting and congestion problems. Journey-to-work strategies should include increased emphasis on flex time, telecommuting, and telework programs.

Additionally, improved traveler information systems for transit services, parking availability, and roadway congestion can enable smarter commuting patterns that better match consumer demand to available supply on a real-time basis.

### *Sustainable Infrastructure*

Finally, we ask the Board to engage the County Council in a constructive dialogue about the importance of funding sustainable transportation infrastructure, as suggested in the opening paragraphs on page (i) of the OLO report. As the Planning Board and Council work on the new growth policy and Climate Protection Plan with a focus on sustainability and sustainable transportation modes, we will focus more attention to associated policies, programs, and infrastructure investments targeted to reduce SOV travel demand and offer more transportation choices to County residents and workers.