# Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: June 7, 2012

**PROJECT**
**Federal Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**
Washington, D.C.

**SUBMITTED BY**
Staff of the National Capital Planning Commission

**REVIEW AUTHORITY**
Preparation and Adoption of Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8721

**NCPC FILE NUMBER**
CP01a

**NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER**
N/A

**APPLICANT'S REQUEST**
Final adoption of the updated policies to the Federal Transportation Element, to take effect when all of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital have been adopted.

**PROPOSED ACTION**
Approve as requested

**ACTION ITEM TYPE**
Staff Presentation

## PROJECT SUMMARY

At its July 7, 2011 meeting the Commission approved for public release draft policy updates to the Federal Transportation and Workplace Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. A 60-day public comment period was conducted and staff has been working to respond to the comments that were received as well as drafting a narrative to accompany the new policies. At this time, the policies in the Transportation Element are being presented for final adoption by the Commission. To avoid confusion among the public and applicant agencies as well as provide a streamlined process for updating the Comprehensive Plan, staff is recommending approval of the Transportation Element policies, the policies will not take effect until all the Federal Elements have been updated and are ready for publishing.

## KEY INFORMATION

- Since 2010, NCPC staff has been conducting an update to the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. This update entails working with stakeholders in assessing the effectiveness of existing policies as well as developing a new Urban Design Element in coordination with the Urban Design Task Force.
- The Transportation Element was approved by the Commission for public comment at its July 7, 2012 meeting. Since that time, staff has addressed public comments that have been received as well as drafted a supporting narrative for the element. The narrative and policies comprise the Transportation Element and are attached as Appendix 1.

- The Federal Elements to the Comprehensive Plan contain a large amount of information and policies. Updating and presenting these in their entirety could be challenging to the Commission and to the public. To provide an effective adoption process, staff will be bringing each element to the Commission for final adoption after it has been vetted by the public. However, to avoid confusion regarding which elements are in effect from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and what are in effect from the update process, staff recommends not putting the final policies into effect until the all the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan have been updated and are ready for publishing.

## RECOMMENDATION

Commission action requested:

- **Final adoption** of the updated policies to the Federal Transportation Element

- **Hold the policies in abeyance** until all of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital have been adopted at which time the policies will go into effect (pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8721)

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

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|---|---|
| **Previous actions** | **August 5, 2004** – The Commission adopted the updated Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, which included the current Federal Transportation Element. |
| **Remaining actions** (anticipated) | NCPC staff will present to the Commission all of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital once the update process is complete and prior to the Plan's publishing. |

Prepared by David Zaidain
May 22, 2012

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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Background

The National Capital Planning Commission is responsible for publishing the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. These Elements work in tandem with the District Elements to comprise the full Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The District Elements were recently updated by the District of Columbia and were presented to the Commission at its January 6, 2011 meeting at which time the Commission concluded that the updated District Elements would not have a negative impact on the interests or functions of the federal establishment in the National Capital. The most recent update to the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan was in 2004 and NCPC staff initiated this current update process in 2010. The review has entailed data collection, assessing current policies and outreach to stakeholder agencies, organizations and the general public. The effort is also pursuing a new Urban Design Element for the Plan and an Urban Design Task Force was initiated in July 2011 to support that effort. It is the intention to bring draft updates of the existing elements as well as the new Urban Design Element to the Commission through 2012 and publishing the entire updated Comprehensive Plan in early 2013.

### Proposal

The updated policies contained in this Transportation Element reflect the federal government's emerging priorities for sustainable development as described in Executive Order (EO) 13514 and its supporting policies. The update incorporates many of the policy directives that have been issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as a follow up to EO 13514. This includes the directives for federal agencies to reduce single occupancy commuting for their employees and to support active commuting such as bicycling. The policy update also reflects more discreet changes such as the repeal of the federal law prohibiting agencies from operating off-site shuttle service (formerly 31 USC, Section 1344). The policies maintain the existing parking ratio goals for federally owned facilities, but encourage facility managers to account for expanded transit options such as VRE and MARC. They also reinforce the importance of federal agencies to develop comprehensive Transportation Management Plans (TMP's) that mitigate their impacts to the surrounding transportation network and to look beyond the borders of their site to understand these impacts. Overall, the policies focus on actions that federal agencies should take to plan and manage their facilities more efficiently while supporting higher level policies which focus on how the federal government can support a more multi-modal and sustainable region. The full Federal Transportation Element with the supporting narrative and the policies is attached to this EDR as Appendix 1.

*Process Proposal*

The Federal Elements to the Comprehensive Plan contain a large amount of information and policies. Updating and presenting these in their entirety would potentially be overwhelming to the Commission and to the public. To provide an effective adoption process, staff will be bringing each element to the Commission for final adoption after it has been vetted by the public. However, to avoid confusion regarding what elements are

in effect from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and what are applicable now, staff recommends not putting the final policies into effect until the entire Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan have been updated and are ready for publishing. Hence, the policies contained in the updated Element will be considered final and will not change. They will reflect the policy direction of the entire update, but will not be put into effect until the Federal Elements have been updated.

## II. PROJECT ANALYSIS/CONFORMANCE

### Executive Summary

The Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element sets policies and goals that guide the federal government's efforts to support and enhance the region's transportation network. How federal employees choose to travel to and from work significantly impacts the performance of the region's transportation system. Providing multimodal transportation choices, integrating services from various providers, as well as accommodating flexible schedules and telecommuting opportunities can facilitate greater access to federal workplaces, decreased regional congestion at peak hours, and improved local and regional transit ridership.

The updated policies provided in this element will help manage the federal government's transportation impacts and thus enable agencies to meet mission needs while fulfilling the goals of EO 13514 through individual agency sustainability plans. The policies also establish priorities for the federal government in terms of regional transportation investment and coordination with local planning organizations. These priorities include working with host communities to facilitating alternative means of transportation such as bicycles, developing policies regarding site selection for federal facilities that reduce adverse impacts, and encouraging agencies to mitigate adverse impacts to local transportation networks by adopting comprehensive Transportation Management Plans.

### Analysis

The major changes to the Transportation policies since the July 7, 2011 meeting have occurred based on the public comments received during the 60 day public comment period. Below is a detailed accounting of the public comments that have been received, their source and how staff has edited the policies based on the comments. It has also been noted if the comments did not lead to a policy change.

Public comments are in standard font and Staff responses are in *italics*

**Comments submitted by Gail Becker**
**Received: August 20, 2011**

Comments with Responses in italics:

1. Prohibit smoking at all bus stations adjacent to metro stations.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction over properties adjacent to Metro stations.*

2. Prohibit smoking within 100 feet of all bus stops.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction over properties adjacent to Metro stations.*

3. Post no-smoking signage at all bus stations and bus stops.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction over signage at bus stations or bus stops.*

4. Remove ash receptacles at all metro stations and post no smoking signage.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction over smoking facilities at metro stations.*

5. Issue a fine to anyone who smokes or litters at bus stations, bus stops, and rail facilities.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction over smoking regulation at metro or other local transit stations or bus stops.*

6. Provide a flat rate public transportation benefit, to federal employees regardless of distance traveled or mode of transportation, provided the mode is walking, biking, or public transportation.

*Staff agrees with this policy direction and the following policy update is meant to encourage agencies in providing such a benefit:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY F5: Steadily increase transit subsidy rates, and consider applying subsidies and incentives to other modes, such as biking, walking, carpooling, and vanpooling* ***while not subsidizing single occupancy vehicle commuting or parking.***

7. Discontinue free parking and charge employees the market rate for parking.

*Staff agrees with this policy direction and the following policy update is meant to encourage agencies to not subsidize single occupancy vehicle parking. Providing free parking is considered a subsidy and this policy should discourage providing such free parking:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY F5: Steadily increase transit subsidy rates, and consider applying subsidies and incentives to other modes, such as biking, walking, carpooling, and vanpooling* ***while not subsidizing single occupancy vehicle commuting or parking.***

8. Prohibit smoking on all federal-owned or leased property, including sidewalks and parking facilities.

*NCPC does not have jurisdiction in establishing anti-smoking policies at federal facilities.*

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**Comments submitted by David Humphreys**
**Received: September 8 2011**

Comments with responses in italics:

1. The transportation and workplace policies often seem at odds with each other. A number of transportation policies attempt to manage demand among modes but do nothing to manage the demand for travel itself. Supply of active transportation and transit modes is encouraged as a way to reduce SOV VMT (*Single Occupancy Vehicles, Vehicle Miles Traveled*), but the workplace policies continue to concentrate travel in radial corridors and centralized locations which promote congestion, just across different modes. The sustainable development model is to mix uses – live, work, play – in an effort to manage travel itself. Federal policy should be about decreasing the need to travel and the need to travel long distances, not about preserving the status quo.

*Staff does not agree with this comment. Both the workplace element and the transportation element seek to manage the demand to travel through several policies. First the policies support the use of telecommuting and alternative work schedules as well as Live-Near-Your Work programs. The policies also encourage the consideration of proximate housing as a method to manage travel demand to federal facilities. This is reflected in the following policies:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY F2: Maximize telecommuting strategies for employees in accordance with federal law.*
> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY F3: Employ compressed and variable work schedules for employees, consistent with agency missions.*
> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY F4: Support* ***multi-modal*** *commuting* ***and shorter commute times*** *through* ***federal facility location decisions and*** *Live-Near-****Your-****Work programs* ***by creating partnerships with federal agencies and local governments.***

2. Many of the transportation and workplace policies are ill suited to military installations. These installations are small cities, not the typical Federal administrative campus. They are 24 hour operations which contain residential, education, library, recreation, industrial, retail, personal services, office, and specialized uses (airports, munitions storage, training ranges, etc.). They have hard security perimeters which dramatically impact public access to installation facilities, movement onto and off of the installation, and accessibility to transit. They are often located on the edges of the NCR (*National Capital Region*), their scale does not lend themselves to the transit goals and parking ratios, and the nature of their operation make interior shuttling difficult to accomplish. They are expected to provide service members basic, nationally agreed upon benefits on the installation (e.g. medical, Exchange, Commissary, dining, and recreation, etc.). The DOD (*Department of Defense*) Anti-terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) requirements often preclude the creation of Clarendon-

style developments and these requirements are not waiverable. These differences are not recognized in these policies, and do not seem to be appreciated by NCPC when reviewing and commenting on projects and master plans.

*Staff agrees that often times security precludes the ability of the Department of Defense and other agencies to successfully meet Comprehensive Plan goals. The policies are considered goals and if facilities are unable meet them, the agency can demonstrate to the Commission during the review process the causes. The Commission and staff is sensitive to security issues and gives due consideration to these issues in reviewing proposed projects. Further, the parking ratios are goals as well and are particularly flexible in the outreaches of the National Capital Region in areas not served by transit. The agency must demonstrate through their Transportation Management Plan how they are working to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and why they are unable to if not.*

3. Transportation Policies, Objective (Page 1) -- The specific mention of EO 13514 (*Executive Order 13514*) in the Transportation Policies Objective doesn't make sense. The EO is about greenhouse gases, stormwater management, energy use, sustainable buildings, etc. The Objective language concerns only transportation.

*Staff does not agree. As the goals of Executive Order 13514 is essentially to increase its energy efficiency and reduce its greenhouse emissions through direct and indirect activities. How federal employees commute to federal facilities is an indirect activity that affects the amount of greenhouse emissions responsible to that facility.*

4. Transportation Policies, Parking Ratios (Page 3, Para 3 & 4) -- The word "suburban" in items 3 and 4 is unnecessary. It makes a distinction without a difference. The NCR is a metro area with urban, suburban, exurban, and rural development patterns. The ratios are different because of transportation mode availability, not the development pattern.

*Staff agrees with this comment and has edited TRANSPORTATION POLICY C2 and C3 as such:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY C3: For ~~**suburban**~~ federal facilities outside the **Historic District of Columbia boundaries** within 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station **or other fixed-guideway transit stop with similar capacity**, the parking ratio should not exceed one space for every three employees*
>
> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY C4: For ~~**suburban**~~ federal facilities **outside the Historic District of Columbia boundaries** beyond 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station, the parking ratio will reflect a phased approach linked to **the availability of regional transit such as MARC or VRE service as well as other** planned **transit** improvements over time.*

5. Transportation Policies, Transportation Management Plans (Page 4, Para 6) -- It is not clear that this policy is achievable under Federal statute, at least for DOD installations. DOD installations are permitted to spend MILCON (*military construction*) funds on limited transportation mitigation measures off the installation through the Defense Access Road program. It is not clear that other mitigation expenditures are authorized.

*Staff agrees that the ability for funding off-site improvements can be limited for agencies. However, other opportunities can be pursued either through direct appropriation outside of MILCON funs, partnerships with local units of government or special legislation through the United States Congress.*

6. Transportation Policies, Parking Ratios (Page 3, Para 1) -- Why should the Federal Government provide any parking in the Central Employment area? It has significant density, and robust transit, bike and walking circulation networks.

*While staff agrees that once additional modes of transportation become available in the CEA (streetcar, more complete bicycle networks, etc) and gaps in the Metro system are closes, parking should be further restricted in the core. However, it is currently difficult to eliminate parking at all federal facilities.*

7. Transportation Policies, Transportation Management Plans (Page 4, Para 8) -- The requirement to update TMPs (*Transportation Management Plans*)every two years is unworkable. One will be starting the next TMP before the ink is dry on the previous one, and definitely before many of the previous plan elements can be implemented and evaluated for effectiveness. More practically, agencies cannot afford and will not fund a TMP every 2 years. Everyone is being set up for failure. Tie the trigger for a TMP update to significant changes or every 5 years.

*Staff agrees with this and as a point of clarification the policy is meant that agencies should review TMP's every two years to ensure that they still reflect existing conditions. If there has been no expansion or growth at the facility than the TMP does not have to be revised with the two year time frame. This policy is meant to encourage monitoring of the conditions at federal facilities. To clarify, staff has amended this policy as follows:*

> ***TRANSPORTATION POLICY D8: Review*** *<u>TMPs at least every two years</u> to* ***ensure it*** *reflect**s** the most current employee information.*

*Further requirements for Master Plans which include TMP's are provided for in NCPC's submission guidelines which require a new Master Plan every five years.*

8. Transportation Policies, Transportation Demand Management (Page 6, Para 4) Reducing commutes through location decisions and live near work programs are excellent policies. Unfortunately, the preponderance of the other Transportation and Workforce policies appear to work against sustainability.

*Staff does not agree with this assertion and is unclear as to which policies work against the principles of sustainability.*

**Comments submitted by Dale Murad**
**Received: September 12, 2011**

Comments with responses in italics:

1. The draft updates to the Transportation Policies in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital indicate that the federal government should (a) "Provide motor vehicle parking only for those federal employees who are unable to use other travel modes" (parking policy #1) and (b) establish parking ratios on a sliding scale depending on whether a facility is in the Central Employment Area (CEA--1 space for five employees), outside the CEA but within the Historic District of Columbia (DC) boundaries (i.e. DC, Arlington, and part of Alexandria--1 space per four employees), in suburban areas within 2,000 feet of a Metrorail or similar station (1 space per three employees), or in suburban areas beyond 2,000 feet of a Metrorail or similar station (phased approach). If one assumes that the sliding scale will necessarily accommodate the maximum number of federal employees who are unable to use other travel modes, these provisions would, in theory, make sense. But there is no basis for making such an assumption.

2. And where the maximum parking ratio does not provide enough parking to accommodate the need for employees to drive to work, the arbitrary limits the Transportation Element sets on parking will bring about the sort of transportation chaos to local neighborhoods that a more conventional zoning approach (which sets minimum--not maximum--parking requirements) is typically designed to avoid. To see how the Transportation Element's policy has failed in the past, one need only look to the way arbitrary maximum parking ratios have worked at the National Guard Readiness Center on South George Mason Drive, in Arlington, where local traffic is disrupted every morning by Readiness Center employees scavenging for parking off campus.

3. But that is only one problem with this approach. Another problem is that application of the arbitrary parking ratios will, in some instances, require that Federal employees who use Metro walk what NCPC recognizes is an unreasonable distance from their destination on the Metro to their place of employment. Agencies located in parts of Anacostia, for instance, may be within the CEA but beyond the 2000 foot distance which NCPC recognizes (in footnote 1 of the Transportation Policies Federal Element of the Comprehensive Plan) as a reasonable walking distance from Metro. And if the agency is on a secure campus, even if the agency provides shuttles from the metro to the border of its campus, employees may well have to walk an additional distance to get to their actual place of employment.

4. Another problem is that the general restriction assumes, contrary to fact, that federal agencies are in a position to assess which/how many employees are "unable to use other transportation modes." Even if federal agencies could assess the geographic proximity of their employees to a fixed transit system, they cannot assess temporal proximity--the length of time it would take an employee to get to work on the fixed system. That is because even people who live close to a particular system (e.g. Metro) may be far from an agency in terms of the length of time it takes to travel on the system.

5. Metro has no express lines and it can take a very long time to travel on the system, depending on one's starting point, even if one does not consider the potential need to change Metro

lines. And changing lines is only one part of the equation. It may be necessary to drive to a metro station, park nearby, walk to the station, change lines at some point, take a shuttle from the station to a "nearby" agency, and walk from the agency boundary (if it is on a secure campus) to the employee's building. Each change of mode adds significant time to a commute and someone who lives well within the Historic District boundaries can easily see his commute time quadrupled from a reasonable time (e.g. half an hour) to two hours (each way) because of the arbitrary decision that he is "able" to use a mode of transit other than his car.

6. Even employees whose homes are situated close to their agency may not be able to avail themselves of the mode of transit one might assume they could use. They may have to drive to be able to drop their children off at day care, which may not be located near their place of work. Or they may be so close-in to congested parts of the city that getting on a Metro train during rush hour is not realistic because the trains will go past them having been filled to capacity at more distant stations. As the Introduction to the current Transportation Element recognizes, "Metrorail trains are operating well above design limits, handling crush loads during rush hour." And while it is possible that Metro's problems will be fixed in time, the reality is that today, Metro is broken and there are no assurances that it will, in fact, be fixed. See "Sarles 'committed' to rebuilding Metro," Washington Post (print ed., Aug 6, 2011, p. B3), which indicates that even Metro General Manager Richard Sarles recognizes that Metro needs "rebuilding." Also see "Reduced spending may stall regional transit plans," a column by Robert McCartney on p. C-1 of the July 10, 2011 issue of the Washington Post which notes that the House of Representatives has proposed transportation funding cuts and that the "Metro transit system stands to lose about $70 million a year.... Chief Executive Richard Sarles has warned that the loss of federal funds would mean more delays, less-reliable trains and buses, and deteriorating stations."

*Staff feels that all of the comments above are in respond to the Transportation element and particular the policies related to employee commuting and parking at federal facilities. The parking ratios established in the Transportation Element are developed based on a sliding scale of proximity to transit in locations around the region. They are considered goals and agencies are required to formulate a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to demonstrate how they are meeting these goals and a justification for why they may not be. Hence, if a facility is located in such an area that additional parking beyond the parking ratio is needed to lessen its impact, which must be justified in the TMP. Staff agrees that conditions can vary by facility and by employee characteristics, and this is why it is imperative that facilities that are developing a Master Plan formulate a sound TMP that demonstrates how these transportation impacts are being addressed and how the facility is meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan requirements. Generally, in conversations with agency stakeholders as well as in comparison to zoning requirements of local jurisdictions, the parking ratios perform well and hence are not being adjusted at this time.*

7. There would be a natural tendency for Federal employees to situate themselves in locations near or easily accessible to their places of employment. But that is not an option for Federal employees, given that Federal agencies routinely move their offices. The agency I worked for in 2007, for instance, moved offices twice in two years. I changed employers, and now my new agency is planning to move in two years from now. And, as the recent Base Realignment exercise shows, agencies do choose to move away from places, like Arlington,

with readily accessible mass transit options, to places like the Mark Center, and Ft. Belvoir, leaving employees with few commuting options other than their cars. To quote Robert McCartney, from his column on page C-1 of the August 28, 2011 issue of the Washington Post, "Our biggest employer, Uncle Sam, makes crucial choices about where to locate jobs with little heed to vital regional goals, such as reducing traffic...."

*Staff considers the comment above to be appropriate to the federal facility siting policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Staff agrees that many recent facility location decisions, particularly BRAC related moves, would have challenging consequences for the Region. NCPC's siting policies established in the Comprehensive Plan focus agency siting decisions on transit- albeit in the Central Employment Area where the greatest amount of transit options are available or in proximity to transit nodes throughout the region. The main challenge in implementing these siting decisions it that often times NCPC is not consulted or does not have jurisdiction in reviewing a siting choice. This was the case with the BRAC process and in some congressionally legislated facility decisions.*

8. To the extent that NCPC assumes "Active Commuting," such as bicycling, is an option, NCPC fails to account for the fact that no active commuting option is realistically available throughout the year. On those days when roads are too icy to make bicycling/walking, etc safe, on those days when it is unhealthy to use active commuting because of Code Red conditions, on those days when we are experiencing thunderstorms, etc., even active commuters will need to use other options. So "active commuting" may help minimize the use of motor vehicles by some people, but it does not replace them altogether unless you assume, contrary to fact, that Metro and other transit options can handle additional ridership and that everyone who uses active commuting can arrive at work in a reasonable time using mass transit.

9. If all Federal facilities in the National Capital Region were as well situated as the NCPC's own offices are, with easy access to multiple Metro stations in the heart of the District, expecting people to be able to get to Federal agencies by Metro, bicycle, or means besides motor vehicles would make more sense than it does. But the idea that the NCPC can simply solve the region's transit problems by fiat is fantasy and it will only make a bad transportation situation worse--for Federal employees, for the neighborhoods they work in, and for anyone who uses mass transit.

*The "Active Commuting" and other transportation related policies are meant to enhance the option of those who want to commute in such manner to work. An overall goal of the Transportation element is establish as many mode choices for federal employee commuting and not a requirement for certain modes.*

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**Comments submitted by Alex Block, Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)**
**Received: September 12, 2011**

Comments with responses in italics:

1. Section 7 references safe and convenient means of ingress and egress for all commuters, including bicycles and pedestrians. This point deserves emphasis for both federally-owned space as well as federally-leased space, particularly in coordination with recommendation 2 of the Active Commuting and Bicycling for Federal Employees section, which mandates the provision of secure and sheltered storage facilities. The provision of such facilities is undermined if those facilities are difficult for employees to access.

*Staff agrees with this statement, however NCPC has little involvement or jurisdiction over private development which is where federal lease space is housed. However, NCPC continues to work with the District of Columbia and federal stakeholders to ensure that federally owned development is compatible private office space development.*

2. Commuter Rail, Rail Transit, and Bus Transit section 5 references the "Downtown Circulator." Since the DC Circulator is now an established transit service, it can be referenced by name. Likewise, this list of regional transit systems should also include Capital Bikeshare. The region's bikeshare system functions as a type of bicycle transit, rather than bicycle rental, and should be grouped with fellow transit systems accordingly.

*Staff agrees with this comment and has amended the referenced policy as follows:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY A5: The* ***efforts of local jurisdictions to*** *design and* ***implement*** *new, expanded, and innovative transit services that supplement existing transit and fill unmet transit needs (e.g.,* ~~***Downtown***~~ ***DC*** *Circulator, Busway, Bus Rapid Transit projects, light rail,* ~~***trolley***~~ *streetcars and* ***vehicle sharing services****).*

3. Section 5 references parking structure design. This section should also mention active ground-level uses, though that emphasis might be better located in the forthcoming Urban Design element.

*Staff agrees that providing active ground level uses in parking structures will be explored in the urban design element. However, the policy referenced in this comments was meant to reflect this notion through the inclusion of language referencing "enhancing of adjacent public space"*

4. Section 8 references the utilization of off-site parking to meet the demand for parking spaces. This section should also include a recommendation that on-site parking spaces be available for after-hours public use to ensure the best utilization of those parking assets for the greater community whenever possible given security constraints.

*Staff agrees with this comment and has amended the referenced policy to read as follows:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY B9:* ***Evaluate opportunities to share parking spaces with nearby uses*** *or lease parking spaces to local car share services. Agencies should pursue arrangements whereby the agency is able to utilize car sharing vehicles in fair exchange for the service's use of parking spaces.*

5. Section 3 references Metrorail "or other fixed guideway transit… with similar capacity." Would this include future streetcar lines? Streetcars offer a substantial capacity increase over buses, but cannot match Metrorail. This section should be amended to better define what "similar capacity" means, including such modes as streetcars.

*This section referenced to any transit mode that has similar capacity and connectivity to the regional system. Staff believes it would be premature to specifically add streetcar at this time as the streetcar system has not been implemented and their performance has not been established.*

6. Section 1 should be structured broadly to talk about all Federal facilities, not just campus-style developments. Likewise, the discussion of dedicated trails and sidewalks should instead be a focus on dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities, with the specifics of those facilities determined by the surrounding context of the site. The section mentions integration with existing facilities in the area, but the terminology isn't clear. These policies should emphasize integration with the existing infrastructure and planning occurring in the District of Columbia and neighboring jurisdictions. The report entitled "Implementing a Successful Bicycle and Active Commuting Program in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area," published in May 2010 provides guidance towards the implementation of the best practices for active commuting in federal workplaces.

*Staff agrees with this comment and the reference report was a large part of the discussion in creating the active commuting policies and these policies were developed in coordination with the Council of Environmental Quality. The policies are meant to encourage federal facilities to meet the requirements of local jurisdiction for bicycles facilities through the following policy:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY E2: Provide secure and sheltered bicycle parking spaces or bicycle lockers in close proximity to building entrances at federal buildings and on federal campuses. The number of* ***spaces, storage, and support facilities*** *provided should be in accordance with the requirements of the local jurisdiction in which the federal facility resides. In the absence of such requirements, federal facilities should provide a* ~~***abundant***~~ ***sufficient*** *supply of bicycle* ~~***lockers or parking***~~ *spaces,* ***storage and support facilities*** *to meet current* ***and future*** *employee needs* ***as identified in the TMP and to encourage greater active commuting****.* ~~*and to promote* ***bicycle*** *commuting*~~*.* ***Opportunities to employ bicycle sharing programs should be evaluated and implemented where possible and coordinated with regional bicycle sharing programs to have a flexible, efficient system.***

*Staff agrees that the Active Commuting policies should be geared towards all facilities and not campuses and has amended the appropriate policy to read as follows:*

> *TRANSPORTATION POLICY E1: Provide* ***a system of dedicated trails and sidewalks for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians*** ~~***bicycle travel lanes, paths, or trails between***~~ ***among federal facilities*** *campus entrance points and all buildings on the campus. Where* ***such facilities*** ~~***bike lanes, paths, or trails***~~ *exist outside of the campus****,*** ~~***bicycle travel ways on campus***~~ ***the campus system should connect*** ~~***to those outside of the campus***~~ ***and provide through access where possible****.* ***Providing trail and sidewalk connections to nearby transit stations is a priority****.*

7. Section 6: Including "Bicycle Sharing" infrastructure amongst the list of publicly-available infrastructure on federal land is an excellent policy. The efficacy of these systems is greatly enhanced by including federal land.

*No response required*

8. This document features large numbers of stricken sections. The Downtown DC BID assumes that these concepts and elements will be integrated into the forthcoming Urban Design element of the Comprehensive Plan. These deleted sections represent important concepts and policies for building development and should remain within the Comprehensive Plan in some fashion.

*Staff agrees with this statement. Many of the policies related to development character and broader design and development goals will be further explored in the forthcoming federal Urban Design element.*

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**Comments submitted by: Lindsley Williams**
**Received: September 12, 2011**

1. Transportation Policies:

Commuter Rail, Rail Transit, and Bus Transit

> [Missing]. Add policy to encourage construction of regional fare structures and fare media for at least Federal commuters who must utilize multiple transportation systems in commuting from residence to work and returning, as well as for construction of rules for allocating revenues so collected among the systems utilized in proportion to their respective normalized commuter fares (to ensure that subsidies that may exist or come to exist would continue to apply).

*Staff does not agree with this suggestion. While subsidizing transit ridership is supported by the Comprehensive Plan, influencing regional fare structures among local transit providers is beyond NCPC's scope.*

2. Parking Ratios

> 3. and 4. Broaden standards "a Metrorail station within 2,000 feet" to include other rail systems or other systems that satisfy the spirit of "well-served" as outlined in Federal Employment element above. Certainly include rail systems such as MARC and VRE.(p.3)

*Staff agrees with this comment has believes it has accomplished this through the following policy:*

*TRANSPORTATION POLICY C4: For* ***~~suburban~~*** *federal facilities* ***outside the Historic District of Columbia boundaries*** *beyond 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station, the parking ratio will reflect a phased approach linked to* ***the availability of regional transit such as MARC or VRE service as well as other*** *planned* ***transit*** *improvements over time.*

3. [Missing] Tighten standards to those being maintained for inside the CEA when the facility is particularly close (1,000 feet?) of rail-transit, such as at the forthcoming Federal employment center at New Carrollton (p.3)

*Staff does not agree with this as the CEA is the focus of multiple modes of transit and not one main mode, hence the strong restriction. As areas such as New Carrollton become better served by multiple modes of transit, it may be appropriate to further restrict the parking ratio goals.*

4. [Missing] Account, in the measurement of employees, average daily census given all forms of leave, official travel, and telecommuting so that the ratios relate to typical workdays, not a non-existent day when "all hands" are directed to assemble; adjust standards downward, if appropriate, but be more accurate.( p.3).

*Staff agrees with this suggestion and believes that this should be accomplished in the Transportation Management Plans that agencies are required to prepare.*

5. Transportation Management Plans (*TMPs*)

6. Restructure scope of TMPs so that it provides that TMP measures should be in place when plan or project shows risk not just of "failure" but also serious degradation of functioning of identified transportation assets; likewise, ensure that the plan or project TMP not only identifies TMP measures and includes them as goals, but that sources of resources needed to address these are included and represent commitments from those sources should the need arise. (p.4)

*Staff agrees with this suggestion and believes it is achieved in the following proposed policy:*

***TRANSPORTATION POLICY D6: Assess, as part of the TMP, projected impacts of a project or master plan on surrounding, affected corridors. Where a project or master plan may cause an intersection or roadway to fail, mitigation measures must be identified and included in the TMP goals. The range of mitigation measures could include demand management strategies through off-site improvements. These measures should be determined in coordination with the local government officials.***

**Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

This update to the Federal Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is provided in accordance with the provisions of the preparation and adoption of Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan specified at 40 U.S.C. § 8721.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Staff reviewed the proposal in accordance with NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, and determined that the proposed federal element update can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis and documentation. The action is determined by the staff to qualify as categorical exclusion as cited at the Commission's procedure (11) "Adopt a Federal Element of the Comprehensive Plan or amendment thereto, 40 U.S.C. 8721(a): D.C. Code 2-1003."

**National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

This proposal does not sustain characteristics as a federal undertaking. The proposal of policy revision does not implement, contract, or take other actions that would preclude consideration of the full range of alternatives to avoid or minimize harm to federal historic properties. Consequently, the proposed action does not require review pursuant to the NHPA, Section 106 process.

## III. CONSULTATION

**Coordination with federal and local agencies**

The updates to the Federal Transportation Elements have been coordinated with external stakeholder agencies through stakeholder meetings, individual agency meetings and through the public comment period. This group met formally to discuss related comprehensive plan issues and also commented on drafts of the policy updates.

**Appendix**
Copy of the Federal Transportation Element (See attached)

# APPENDIX 1 – TEXT OF THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT (PRE-FORMATTING)

## Federal Transportation Element

### INTRODUCTION

*Goal: In the National Capital Region the federal government seeks to*

> Develop and maintain a multi-modal regional transportation system that meets the travel needs of workers, residents, and visitors, while improving regional mobility and air quality through expanded transportation alternatives and transit-oriented development.

The ability for federal employees to get to and from work in an efficient and stress-free manner impacts the government's general productivity and its ability to attract and retain quality personnel.

The federal government employs approximately 370,000 people in the National Capital Region. As such, the federal government has a strong interest in improving the quality of transportation services and infrastructure. The federal government is in a unique position to provide leadership regarding transportation decisions that can accommodate its workforce's travel needs and set a standard for the entire region. This dual role will foster development of the transportation infrastructure required by the federal government and contribute to overall infrastructure solutions and beneficial development patterns in the region.

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, the National Capital Region is the most congested in the nation.[1] The region's transit infrastructure operates near capacity with Metrorail trains handling loads above design limits during rush hour. Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter railroads are standing room only. Around the region, transportation infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with growing demand. Demand for bike-sharing facilities, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes reflect increasing interest in bicycling and walking for all or a part of the daily commute.

As more people move to the region each year, where they live and work, and their transportation choices impact the available capacities of existing transportation systems, as well as the decision-making process for investments in new transportation systems. Transportation system investments and regional growth patterns are interconnected, and the decisions made in each of these policy areas affect others, as well as the quality of life for residents in the region. Transportation systems have a direct impact on regional land use decisions, which in turn impact transportation demand.

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[1] Texas Transportation Institute, *2011 Urban Mobility Report*, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 2011.

The federal government makes a significant contribution to regional solutions by encouraging alternative commuting modes for its employees. Federal policies supporting transit use, ridesharing, telework, bicycling and other alternative commute modes provide a range of options that compare favorably against the region's congested roadways. These options are increasingly seen as a benefit of working for the federal government. Policies in this element encourage federal coordination with regional entities in developing solutions that offer greater transportation system efficiencies and a wide range of transportation choices that result in improved access and mobility for both federal and nonfederal employees.

The Transportation Element is built upon the principles of transit-oriented development, sustainability, and smart growth. In conjunction with the Federal Workplace Element's location and design policies, the Transportation Element focuses on maximizing federal employees' and facilities' access to the region's extensive transit system. The provision of parking spaces at the workplace is perhaps the most important factor in the employee's selection of travel mode. By limiting parking at federal facilities within easy reach of Metrorail stations and supporting transit incentive programs, the Transportation Element provides both an incentive and a rational approach to shifting drivers to transit.

Element policies also support walking and bicycle commuting, reward ridesharing, and bolster transit use by encouraging new transit services and enhanced pedestrian environments on federal campuses. These policies are designed to work with regional transit oriented development strategies to provide an expanded range of housing, shopping, and recreation opportunities near transit. While addressing work commutes is critical, successfully coordinating land use and transportation options will address the full array of daily trips. This includes the ability of federal workers to easily meet daily shopping needs by walking to shops and stores, or have affordable housing options near their work, reducing commute distances.

The federal government continues to take an active leadership role in the transportation arena. Through its regional transit subsidy program, the federal government continues to provide subsidies to federal employees. Though declining in amount, this program has been a huge success based upon the number of federal employees using Metro during morning and evening rush hours. The Metro system carried a record number of rail and bus passengers in 2001, more than a million every day, and 42 percent of rush hour commuters on Metrorail were federal government employees As federal employees make up 13 percent of the regional workforce, the federal employee transit subsidy program has long been a driver of demand for the regional transportation system. However, given current budget conditions this subsidy has been reduced from the maximum $230 per month to $120 per month per employee and could be reduced further in coming years. If not balanced out by more flexible working hours and telecommute policies, this incentive reduction in commuting to work through transit could have a negative impact on the regional transportation system.

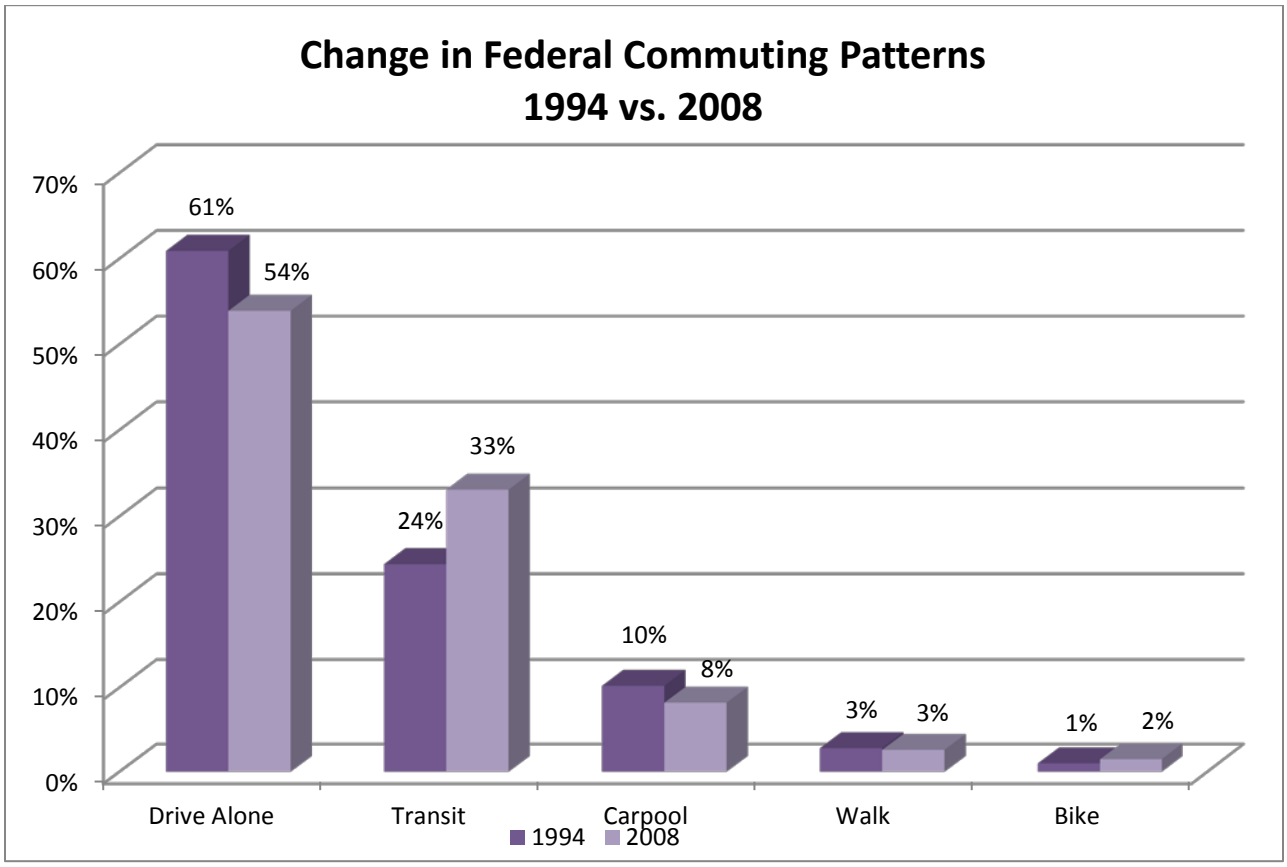
The federal government is already a recognized leader in addressing the region's transportation challenges, but these challenges are great and require a more coordinated approach to raise the overall level of success. Achieving a balanced set of regional solutions requires an approach that recognizes the reciprocal relationship between providing incentives and options and minimizing

disincentives; rewards choices that benefit the region; and prioritizes investments in transportation infrastructure. The policies contained herein are designed to achieve such a coordinated approach.

***How Federal Workers Commute to Work***

Before developing transportation policies affecting federal agencies in the National Capital Region, it is critical to understand current commuting patterns of federal employees and how they changed over time. Comparing these patterns to the region can provide a measure for how well the federal government encourages multiple commuting options for its employees.

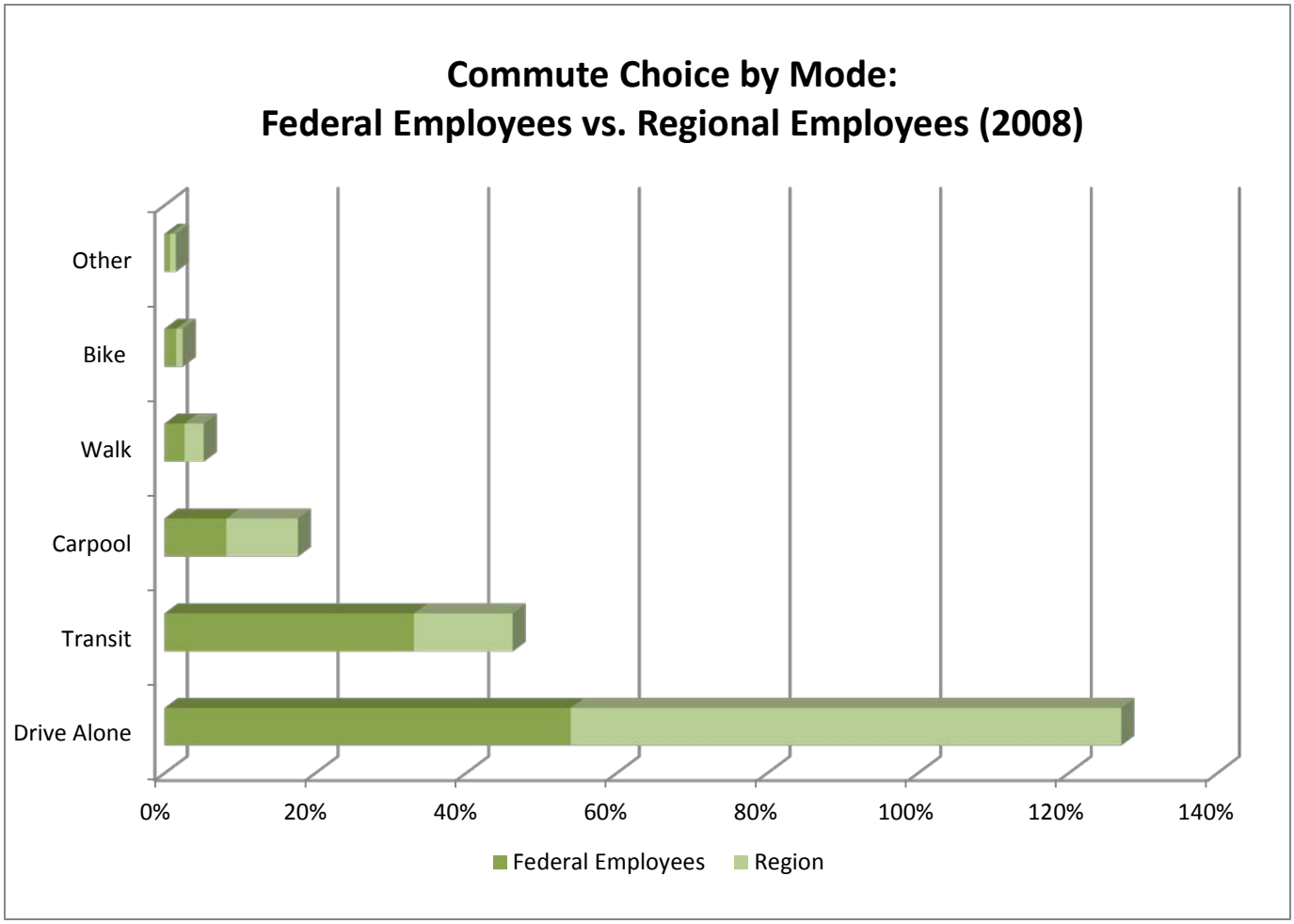
A useful information source is the *Household Travel Survey* conducted periodically by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOG) Transportation Planning Board. Last published in 2009, the survey includes responses from federal employees and provides a general measure of federal employee commuting patterns in the National Capital Region. The change in commuting patterns initially documented in 1994, and most recently completed in 2007-2008, is illustrated in the following chart.



Between 1994 and 2008, federal employees in the region are increasingly using transit for their commute. Fewer federal workers chose to drive alone to work, and interestingly, carpooling is a less popular option. While representing only a small number of commute trips, there is growing interest in walking and biking.

The federal government's use of alternative work schedules and telework options contribute to commuter flexibility and reduced trips already. Growing interest in supporting a mobile workforce through hotelling, redesigned office spaces and technology will further affect commuting patterns. In 2010, 27 percent of federal employees took advantage of their agencies' telecommuting policies.[2]

A telling analysis can be found by comparing the federal government's commuting habits with the region as a whole.




[2] Commuter Connections – 2010 State of the Commute Survey Presentation. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, July 21, 2010.

While 73 percent of the region commutes to work alone in a car, only 54 percent of federal workers make this choice. Federal employees are much more likely to commute by transit (33 percent compared to the region's 13 percent) than the region as a whole, which may reflect the proximity of many federal employment centers to transit, and federal programs and incentives encouraging transit and alternative travel modes.

***The Growth of Regional Transit***

The National Capital Region continues to see the expansion of transit modes. The Metrorail system, opened in 1976, continues to serve as an important mode of regional transit and is being expanded to Dulles Airport via the Silver Line, with the first phase expected to open in 2013. The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) acquired additional rail cars to assemble eight-car trains, and proposed new underground pedestrian connections between stations to address the need for greater system capacity. WMATA also purchased new alternative fuel buses to provide additional transit service while reducing adverse impacts on air quality.

The Metrorail system shows continued signs of growth as its daily ridership rose from 103,000 in 1977 to 723,000 in 2007.[3] In 2010, Metrorail recorded an average weekday ridership of over 753,000, up from 746,000 in 2009.[4] Metrobus recorded an average weekday ridership of 439,648 riders in 2010[5] but grew at a significantly slower pace than Metrorail. Between 2002 and 2007 Metrorail grew by 3 percent annually whereas Metrobus grew by only 1 percent[6].

VRE and MARC continue to serve regional commuters in Virginia and Maryland, respectively. MARC ridership expanded 30 percent between 2003 and 2010, and currently averages approximately 34,000 passengers per day.[7] VRE grew from a daily average of 5,800 passengers in 1992 to 16,000 in 2010.[8]

In addition to VRE and MARC, other fixed-rail services are emerging. The District of Columbia is embarking on a plan to implement a 37-mile streetcar system. This system, like the Circulator bus service, is intended to connect areas that are underserved by Metrorail and Metrobus. Arlington and Fairfax Counties are working together to establish a streetcar route along Columbia Pike to connect Pentagon City in Arlington with the Skyline/Bailey's Crossroads

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[3] "Transit Ridership- Trends and Markets" Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, Cambridge Systematics, Inc. March 2009.
[4] "Vital Signs Report- A Scorecard of Metro's Key Performance Indicators (KPI)" Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, Office of Performance. May 2011
[5] "Vital Signs Report- A Scorecard of Metro's Key Performance Indicators (KPI)" Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, Office of Performance. May 2011
[6] "Transit Ridership- Trends and Markets" Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, Cambridge Systematics, Inc. March 2009.
[7] "Analysis of MARC Ridership and Delays" Maryland Transportation Authority. July 2010
[8] "VRE Performance Measures" Virginia Railway Express. May 2011

neighborhood in Fairfax County. The proposed Purple Line would provide transit connections from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County. Bus Rapid Transit, similar to a fixed-rail system because it is in a dedicated lane on a controlled schedule but is much less expensive than rail, is also being considered as a viable transit option for the region.

Many of these new transit lines system would be located near existing federal facilities. As these services expand and provide more transportation choices, it is imperative that the federal government implement policies that support federal employee ridership as well as investing in these services where appropriate. As the regional transit system expands and fills service area gaps, federal employees have more transit options and can continue to move away from relying on a single-occupancy vehicle.

Federal actions to encourage transit ridership and support commute trips by other than single-occupant vehicles for federal employees and visitors are critical in fostering a sustainable regional transportation system. It is equally critical for the federal government to work cooperatively with local and regional jurisdictions to address impacts created by location choices, new development, and operations.

***Connections between Facility Siting and Transportation***

The siting and location of federal facilities has a direct relationship on transportation impacts and how they are managed. Facilities located in direct proximity to transit should rely less on single-occupancy vehicles as a method of commuting and support higher employee transit ridership. Facilities situated in areas with less transit access may have higher rates of single occupancy vehicles commuting, but should still strive to provide transit opportunities through carpooling and shuttles to the nearest transit option. Further, Transportation Demand Management (see callout box) is a critical component in managing a facility's transportation impact. Allowing flexible schedules on arrival and departure times can dilute impacts on surrounding transportation networks during peak hours. Encouraging telecommuting can also reduce traffic impacts.

Executive Order 13514 directed the U.S. Department of Transportation, in cooperation with other agencies, to develop sustainable location strategies for federal agencies, and the Council on Environmental Quality subsequently developed instructions for implementing them. These strategies strongly encourage decision makers to thoroughly analyze impacts a proposed facility location may have on the surrounding transportation network prior to finalizing a siting decision. Once a siting decision is made, negative impacts to affected adjacent corridors should be minimized.

Further, federal agencies should work with local officials to determine what improvements or strategies need to be implemented to ensure that a federal facility is successfully integrated into the local and regional transportation system. To accomplish this, agencies should account for their proximity to existing or planned regional transportation networks. Policies in this element

support these approaches: for example, by directing agencies to account for availability of regional transit services when located beyond 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station**.**

Callout box: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The federal government has at its disposal various methods to address transportation needs without providing new infrastructure. These methods address the demand side of the transportation equation rather than the supply side. Managing the demand for transportation services before it results in the need to build new infrastructure can be a cost effective way to address growing transportation needs. Such Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques include spreading out the peak travel period to reduce peak loading; reducing the total number of trips that need to be made; encouraging higher occupancies of vehicles using the system; and shifting trips to modes with excess capacity. The federal government already employs some of these methods.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) documents an employer's active program to foster more efficient employee commuting patterns. The plan includes specific strategies to encourage change in employee travel modes, trip timing, frequency and length, and travel routes so as to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. TMPs outline the strategies that a federal agency intends to employ to meet federal parking goals or ratios within a specified period of time. They provide a format for communicating a federal agency's commitment to reduce the demand for parking spaces and encourage employees to select alternative commuting modes.

Additionally, TMPs highlight the transportation coordination requirements that stem from a federal agency's location relative to surrounding local jurisdictions. They are impact-based, requiring customized solutions for unique circumstances, and focus on the effects to surrounding communities.

The Commission uses TMPs to evaluate a federal facility's ability to comply with prescribed employee parking ratios, and therefore requires that Master Plans for a facility with 100 or more employees include a TMP.[9] Factors such as the relative proximity of carpool lanes, the position of the facility's nearest Metrorail station within the overall Metrorail system, facility work hours and shifts, and employee residence locations are considered. The Commission considers all of the factors presented in the TMP in weighing compliance with prescribed parking ratios; and encourages federal agencies to develop innovative solutions that contribute to reductions in traffic congestion and improvements in air quality.

## POLICY SECTION A: Transportation Management Plans

Federal agencies should:

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[9] Details of NCPC Transportation Management Plan requirements are provided in the NCPC Submission Guidelines.

1. Prepare Transportation Management Plans (TMPs) to encourage employee commuting and work related trips by modes other than the single-occupant vehicle. The TMP should evaluate opportunities and establish goals for employee commuting and work related trips through active commuting, the use of telework and flexible schedules, as well as carsharing and vehicle pooling. The TMP should use techniques such as predictive modeling to determine how likely a given location will reach specified mode split goals.

2. Develop TMPs that explore methods and strategies to meet prescribed parking ratios. A thorough rationale and technical analysis in support of all TMP findings must be provided.

3. Analyze scenarios that incorporate data on employee home zip codes, nearby bus routes, Metrorail, MARC, and VRE lines and their schedules, and that identify existing and planned HOV lanes.

4. Include, within TMPs, implementation plans with timetables outlining each agency's commitment to reaching TMP goals as well as goals established in their Strategic Sustainability Performance Plans. [10]

5. Reflect, within TMPs, planned regional transportation infrastructure or service improvements within five miles of the federal facilities.

6. Assess, as part of the TMP, projected impacts of a project or master plan on surrounding, affected corridors. Where a project or master plan may cause an intersection or roadway to fail, mitigation measures must be identified and included in the TMP goals. The range of mitigation measures could include demand management strategies through off-site improvements. These measures should be determined in coordination with the local government officials.

## POLICY SECTION B: Transportation Demand Management

The federal government should:

1. Encourage ridesharing, biking, walking, and other non-single-occupant vehicle modes of transportation for federal commuters.

2. Maximize telecommuting strategies for employees in accordance with federal law.

3. Employ compressed and variable work schedules for employees, consistent with agency missions.

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[10] Each federal agency is required by Executive Order 13515 to develop a Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan which outlines how each agency will achieve the Executive Order's environmental, economic and energy goals.

4. Support multi-modal commuting and shorter commute times through federal facility location decisions and Live-Near-Your-Work programs by creating partnerships with federal agencies and local governments.

5. Steadily increase transit subsidy rates, and consider applying subsidies and incentives to other modes, such as biking, walking, carpooling, and vanpooling while not subsidizing single occupancy vehicle commuting or parking.

COMMUTER RAIL, RAIL TRANSIT, AND BUS TRANSIT

Capacity and connectivity. Congestion management and improved air quality. Balanced land use and smart growth. Transportation options beyond the private automobile. These regional goals are best served by providing and funding a variety of transit options, with an emphasis on a finely grained network of overlapping and complementary transport services. Federal workers, residents, and visitors should be able to meet many of their travel needs by some form of transit.

The existing transit system is struggling to meet a growing demand. New investment in buses, rail cars, operation and maintenance facilities, and personnel are needed to accommodate the region's growing number of transit riders. Metrobus service should be more frequent and routes updated to better serve new demands. Portions of the Metrorail system are operating beyond capacity.

While transit will not solve all of the region's transportation problems, and cars and roadways will continue to play an important role, a stronger focus on transit is necessary to address the region's growing transportation demands. The number of transit riders continues to grow as regional planners work to shift additional drivers to transit in order to address escalating regional traffic congestion and maintain regional air quality. As described earlier, transportation providers are proposing to expand service and increase capacity for heavy rail, light rail, streetcar and bus systems. Accommodating growth in ridership across modes will require greater levels of investment The success of public transit in the region will require substantial monetary resources from local, regional, and federal funding partners, and the transit system continues to need capital and operating investment. The MWCOG 2010 Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) identified $11 billion of capital investment needs over the next ten years (year-of-expenditure dollars) to maintain existing infrastructure and meet customer demand.

## POLICY SECTION C: Commuter Rail, Rail Transit, and Bus Transit

In order to create an integrated network of complementary transit services, the federal government should support:

1. Capacity and service expansion of the regional Metrorail and Metrobus systems, and other local and regional transit services, particularly where these services will support existing or planned federal facilities.

2. Expanded levels of service for regional commuter rail between the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

3. Increased utilization of passenger rail service in the northeast corridor of the United States as well as points south and west, to serve Union Station in the District of Columbia.

4. Exclusive transit rights-of-way to all regional airports with an emphasis on establishing opportunities for transit-oriented development near stations along these routes.

5. The efforts of local jurisdictions to design and implement new, expanded, and innovative transit services that supplement existing transit and fill unmet transit needs (e.g., DC Circulator, Busway, Bus Rapid Transit projects, light rail, streetcars and vehicle sharing services).

6. The development of intermodal transit centers that provide greater transit access and improved interconnectivity for all commuters.

PARKING

The parking policies and associated parking ratios in this element reflect the relationship between the location of federal workplaces relative to the Metrorail system. In measuring access to transit, the ratios define reasonable walking distance as 2,000 feet, (about a 10 minute walk). Furthermore, the element takes into account the expansion of the Metrorail system, and considers planned expansion of regional commuter service such as MARC or VRE. Additionally, regional air quality does not meet federally mandated levels and the number of congested lane-miles in the region continues to increase. The development of the following parking policies was influenced by the overall quality of available transit services; the proximity and cost of commercial parking facilities; guidelines established by local zoning ordinances; and walking distances and conditions in the region's various cities and counties.

These updated standards better address regional traffic congestion and poor air quality issues by maximizing the use of alternative modes of transportation. These issues pose a very real threat to the ability of federal employees getting to work and the hindering the federal government's ability to conduct business.

The federal government should actively manage its parking supply to provide parking spaces only to those employees who have no alternatives to driving alone by giving priority to carpools and vanpools, while also accommodating visitors and the physically disabled. Providing incentives for employees to leave their cars at home is central to managing parking supply.

In the development of federal parking ratios based on proximity to the Metrorail system, special consideration should be given to federal facilities near "end-of-line" stations or stations that have not yet developed the same transit connections as stations at the center of the system, such as

New Carrollton (at the end of the Orange Line in Maryland). Many employees living beyond the Metrorail system area have fewer transit service choices as they commute in to these facilities. As residential and employment patterns shift over time, federal employees may choose to live closer to the transit lines that serve their work places. In the meantime, every federal facility should be considered relative to its own unique situation, and parking ratios should be applied and enforced with thoughtful consideration.

Beyond the recommended ratios for the amount of parking provided, the parking policies in this element provide direction in relation to parking facility design, placement, access, and possible accommodation of private sector car-sharing services. Related support is also found in the policies related to Transportation Demand Management and Transportation Management Plans. This includes the idea that while transit incentives are desirable, single occupancy vehicle commuting should not be subsidized, including the provision of free parking.

According to Commuter Connections' 2010 *State of the Commute Survey*, 49 percent of federal agencies within the National Capital Region provides free on-site parking. This study also established that 82 percent of employees would drive alone to work if free on-site parking was available, whereas only 41 percent would drive alone to work if the parking was priced. Given this connection, it is critical that federal facilities evaluate their ability to eliminate free parking for single occupancy vehicles by charging a fair market price for employee parking spaces. This evaluation should be included as part of their TDM strategies contained within their TMP, described in the next section.

## POLICY SECTION D: Parking

The federal government should:

1. Provide motor vehicle parking only for those federal employees who are unable to use other travel modes.

2. Give priority parking spaces to carpool and vanpool vehicles, hybrid vehicles, and other vehicles utilizing "clean" technology.

3. Provide parking for disabled persons in accordance with federal law.

4. Provide temporary parking for official vehicles and visitors. The number and location of spaces should be justified in the facility's Transportation Management Plan.

5. Place parking in structures, preferably below ground, in the interest of efficient land use and good urban design. Any parking facility, including surface parking lots and freestanding parking structures, should be designed and constructed in an environmentally sensitive manner using techniques such as permeable pavers, bioswales and green roofs. The design of the parking structures should provide opportunities for future conversion to open or usable space and enhance adjacent public space where possible.

6. Position parking facilities so as not to obstruct pedestrian and bicycle access to buildings and to minimize their visibility from surrounding public rights of way. Access to parking facilities should be consolidated and curb cuts minimized where possible.

7. Provide a safe and convenient means of entry and egress to vehicle garages for all commuters, including bicycle commuters and pedestrians.

8. Consider nearby commercial parking space availability in calculating parking requirements, presuming that employees who choose to drive can purchase parking in nearby private or public facilities at market rates. Any spaces secured for motor-vehicle parking in an adjacent facility must be accounted for in a facility's Transportation Management Plan and should not accommodate parking above the prescribed parking ratios.

9. Evaluate opportunities to share parking spaces with nearby uses or lease parking spaces to local car share services. Agencies should pursue arrangements whereby the agency is able to utilize car sharing vehicles in fair exchange for the service's use of parking spaces.

PARKING RATIOS

The following parking ratios are intended to be used as goals for federal agencies. Federal agency Transportation Management Plans should be developed around attaining these goals, although each federal facility's parking ratio will be evaluated independently and a final determination based upon the circumstances specific to that facility's operational characteristics and location, including local area impacts. Detailed TMPs will be required to justify all proposed parking ratios. TMPs are required to include an analysis of impacts to surrounding local transportation facilities as a result of the anticipated vehicle or employee-generated transit trips.

Parking ratios, the number of parking spaces available per employee population, were divided into four categories depending on the urban character of each area as well as the availability of infrastructure that supports alternative commuting modes. Many factors were taken into account when developing the ratios outlined below. Note that these policies are designed around federal agencies with office functions, and that special consideration should be given to federal facilities with non-office functions such as laboratories and warehouses, and to those employing multiple shifts.

Previously approved federal facilities' parking ratios will be honored by the Commission until an updated master plan or major project is submitted for approval. Such master plans or projects will be evaluated against the new ratios and must be supported by revised TMPs

10. Central Employment Area (CEA): One parking space for every five employees (1:5)

The CEA is characterized by a high concentration of transit services, a walkable and lively street network, and a relative abundance of commercial parking. Within the CEA, the majority of federal facilities lies within a quarter mile (1,320 feet) of a Metrorail station, and are connected to the station by a network of comfortably walkable streets. Additionally, numerous Metrobus routes, express buses, commuter rail services, and private shuttles serve the CEA; and commercial parking facilities are more abundant in the CEA than in other parts of the region.

With the original Metrorail system now complete, new stations coming on line, and other transit modes planning to expand, the CEA can better support federal commuters using alternate transport modes, reducing the need for the federal government to provide parking spaces. Congestion levels in the CEA and poor air quality due to mobile emissions sources further support maintaining federal parking ratios there at 1:5.

11. Historic District of Columbia Boundaries: One parking space for every four employees (1:4)

The Historic District of Columbia Boundary includes the entire District of Columbia outside of the CEA, all of Arlington County, and that portion of the city of Alexandria that lies within the original District of Columbia borders. This area is well served by transit, but federal facilities here tend to be somewhat further from Metrorail stations than in the CEA (between a quarter mile and a half mile) due to increases in station spacing. The completion of the original Metrorail system and the significant amount of transit oriented development in these areas both support higher transit use than in the past. Commercial parking is generally available. Some federal facilities, such as the Pentagon, have direct Metro access while others, such as the Patent and Trademark Office, are a 10-minute walk.

12. Suburban areas within 2,000 feet of Metrorail: One parking space for every three employees (1:3)

Because suburban areas in the region tend to be less well served by transit, commuters must often drive and park to utilize Metrorail and bus transit services. Offices may be located near Metrorail, but ridership to these offices is expected to be lower than in more urban parts of the region. Walking conditions typically degrade with distance from Metrorail stations, and there are fewer commercial parking facilities than in the more urban parts of the region.

Suburban areas within 2,000 feet of Metrorail are defined as those areas beyond the Historic District of Columbia boundaries, but within 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station. Federal facilities that fall into this category include the Suitland Federal Center and the National Institutes of Health. Special consideration will be given to federal facilities near Metrorail stations at or near the end of the line.

13. Suburban areas beyond 2,000 feet of Metrorail: Phased approach linked to planned improvements over time (1:1.5-1:2)

Some federal facilities in the National Capital Region lie beyond the reach of the regional transit system. For such federal facilities, particularly those not served by High Occupancy Vehicle

(HOV) lanes, ridesharing and other forms of commuting by means other than single-occupant vehicle are problematic. The current goal of one parking space for every 1.5 employees (1:1.5) was challenging for some of these facilities to obtain. However, this goal led to the implementation of innovative and effective strategies that help reduce congestion.

For this reason, the base parking ratio of 1:1.5 established for these locations in the 1983 Federal Elements is maintained in this update. Because the Comprehensive Plan's intent is to address the region's worsening problems of traffic congestion and air pollution, more stringent parking ratios for these facilities should be phased in over time as new transit infrastructure, transit services, and HOV lanes are provided to serve these outlying areas. Federal facilities that are served by HOV lanes today and in the future will be expected to achieve a parking ratio of one space for every two employees (1:2). If a new Metrorail station is planned to open within 2,000 feet of a federal facility in this zone, and the opening of a new Metrorail station coincides with the federal facility's build-out schedule, a ratio of one parking space for every three employees is expected (1:3).

The Commission will consider parking ratios for federal facilities in these outlying areas within the context of the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), a regional planning tool that ties air quality and transportation improvements to available funding sources. As new transportation infrastructure near a federal facility comes on line, the facility will be required to meet the more stringent parking ratios associated with the availability of the new infrastructure. Federal agencies should include CLRP projects within the vicinity of their facilities in their TMPs for planning purposes, and such TMPs should be updated regularly to reflect changes in CLRP projects over time.

Federal Element policies discourage locating new federal facilities in these outlying areas because they are poorly served by transportation infrastructure, limiting the commuting options available to federal employees. Additionally, it is inefficient from a regional perspective to fund infrastructure extensions to new areas when adequate infrastructure already exists in more highly developed areas.

ACTIVE COMMUTING AND BICYCLING FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The 1993 Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act encourages alternative commuting to federal worksites and allows agencies to establish a program to support alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips, including furnishing space, facilities, or services to bicycles. In 2010, the Office of the Federal Environment Executive released *Implementing a Successful Bicycle and Active Commuting Program in the Washington Metropolitan Area*. This document encourages more bicycling and active commuting among federal employees. Active commuting can be defined as a method of commuting that is predominately conducted by one or more of a range of physical methods including bicycling, walking, running or other method not using a motorized vehicle.

The bicycle network in the Washington, DC region continues to expand. In the District of Columbia the network grew from 17 miles in 2005 to 49 miles in 2010 with an expectation to reach 70 miles by the end of 2012.[11] Bicycle sharing programs are widely utilized with the Capital Bikeshare program consisting of 17,192 members, 1100 bikes and 118 stations in the District of Columbia and Arlington, and new stations are beginning to spread into the region. As the regional bicycle network continues to grow, federal agencies should work with state and local governments to ensure federal workplaces provide the appropriate amount of bicycle parking and support facilities, and physical connections through their facilities to connect with local and regional networks, as allowed by security requirements.
Providing facilities to serve bicycle commuters holds the potential to vastly increase the number of employees choosing this transport mode. Despite an extensive regional bicycle trail system, only about .5 percent of all commuters choose this mode. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association cites a goal of a 5 percent bicycle mode share, and recommends that all office buildings be equipped with appropriate storage and support facilities to accommodate this mode share. This goal is further supported by District of Columbia and Arlington County zoning ordinances. The District generally requires one bicycle space per 10,000 square feet of office space; and Arlington guidelines require one bicycle space for every 7,500 square feet of office space.

Space reserved now for bicycle parking can be outfitted later in accordance with demand. Facilities required to support bicycle and active commuting include secure parking for bicycles, showers and locker rooms, as well as connections to the regional trail system. Bicycle routes on federal office campuses should connect to all campus buildings. In addition to transportation improvements, other benefits of switching large numbers of employees to active commuting include improved employee fitness and morale, and regional air quality improvements.

## POLICY SECTION E: Active Commuting[12] and Bicycling for Federal Employees

In order to encourage greater active commuting among federal employees, the federal government should:

1. Provide a system of dedicated trails and sidewalks for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians among federal facilities campus entrance points and all buildings on the campus. Where such facilities exist outside of the campus the campus system should connect and provide through access where possible. Providing trail and sidewalk connections to nearby transit stations is a priority.

2. Provide secure and sheltered bicycle parking spaces or bicycle lockers in close proximity to building entrances at federal buildings and on federal campuses. The number of

[11] "District of Columbia Bicycle Master Plan" District Department of Transportation. April 2005
[12] A method of commuting that is predominately conducted by one or more of a range of physical methods including bicycling, walking, running or other method not using a motorized vehicle.

spaces, storage[13] and support facilities[14] provided should be in accordance with the requirements of the local jurisdiction in which the federal facility resides. In the absence of such requirements, federal facilities should provide a sufficient supply of bicycle spaces, storage, and support facilities to meet current and future employee needs as identified in the TMP and to encourage greater active commuting. Opportunities to employ bicycle sharing programs should be evaluated and implemented where possible and coordinated with regional bicycle sharing programs to have a flexible, efficient system.

3. Work with local jurisdiction bike coordinators, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Commuter Connections, and cycling organizations such as the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and others to promote bicycle commuting among federal employees.

4. Support the development of a continuous system of multi-use trails for hikers and bikers in the region, with an emphasis on bicycle commuting.

5. Allow regional and neighborhood trails for non-motorized vehicle and pedestrian access through federal properties, working with facility security staff to determine appropriate access points and pathways.

6. Support the efforts of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority or other transportation entities to provide facilities that encourage bicycle commuting, such as bicycle lockers at transit stations and bike racks on board buses and space for the location of regional bike sharing stations.

## SHUTTLES AND CIRCULATORS

Shuttles and circulators are transit services that fill gaps in existing transit networks in order to serve unmet travel needs. While shuttles provide point-to-point service, circulators run loop service connecting multiple points in a network. Whether completing a commute trip or providing service during the work day, shuttles and circulators play an important role in increasing overall transit system accessibility and use.

In 2005, the legal prohibition which prevented federal agencies from establishing shuttle service from their property to nearby transit was changed to permit such service. Changing this allows federal installations to establish shuttle services connections to nearby transit nodes, aiding employee use of local transit. In April 2010, the U.S. Department of Energy issued policies which provide new guidance to federal agencies in establishing shuttle services to serve their

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[13] **Storage includes vehicle racks and lockers both in public space and within the building footprint. Storage should be made available for bicycles, skateboards, and any other similar, non-motorized vehicle.**
[14] **Support facilities include showers, lockers, changing rooms and any other personal facility needed for a successful bicycle or non-motorized, personal vehicle commute.**

facilities. The policies, titled *Guidance for Federal Agencies on Federal Fleet Management*, stress the importance of partnering with other nearby federal agencies to provide joint service and to employ vehicles that use clean fuel technology to reduce energy usage. The policies in the Transportation Element reinforce this guidance and also guide federal agencies to work with the nearby communities to support existing or planned transit service that may serve the need of a federal facility to link to nearby transit nodes.

## POLICY SECTION F: Shuttles & Circulators

1. Federal agencies should operate circulators on federal campuses with multiple federal buildings. Such circulators should have the following operating characteristics and associated infrastructure:

    a. Maximum of 15-minute headways or on-call service;
    b. Service to areas of federal campuses adjacent to or near transit stations;
    c. Waiting facilities (shelters, benches, trash cans); and
    d. Signage to identify shuttle stops and-with maps of the campus and service area

2. Federal agencies should fund transit-to-workplace shuttles if adequate transit connections are not otherwise present. If transit services are available in proximity to the facility, the agency should work with the appropriate organization to implement connections that serve the facility and not create new, redundant service.

3. Transit station-to-workplace shuttles should be combined with on-campus circulators where on campus circulators are employed.

4. Federal agencies should operate cross-town shuttles in urban areas where inadequate transit service exists to provide transportation between federal agencies doing business with one another or among several locations of one agency. Shuttle services should be coordinated among federal agencies with overlapping route requirements. Where local transit services exist to serve these travel needs, federal agencies should utilize these services in lieu of providing their own shuttles.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

In addition to affecting federal employee commuting patterns, the federal government has a role to play in providing and benefiting from a variety of other transportation infrastructure and service investments. These range from removing infrastructure barriers to developing connections among various transportation modes to freight movement. The federal government should play a leadership role in partnering to address these issues.

The MWCOG estimates that the region will spend an estimated $223 billion to operate, maintain and expand the transportation system in the National Capital Region through 2040.[15] It is critical that the federal government support the investments made into this system through efficient management of its transportation impacts.

## POLICY SECTION G: Other Infrastructure and Transportation Services

As a regional leader in transportation infrastructure and service investments, the federal government should:

1. Support transit-oriented development at Metrorail and other transit nodes.

2. Support the establishment of multimodal connections in the regional transportation system.

3. Support federal and District of Columbia efforts to remove or deck freeways and other transportation infrastructure that interrupt the city grid, and restore the surface network in a manner consistent with the urban design context of the L'Enfant Plan and monumental core.

4. Encourage connections to and the optimum use of all airports serving the region. The capacities of airport service should remain consistent with environmental constraints (particularly noise) and security concerns.

5. Provide sidewalks and non-vehicular connections among buildings on federal campuses as well as between federal buildings, transit stations, and surrounding neighborhood amenities.

6. Provide for publicly accessible bicycle racks and bicycle and vehicle sharing stations on federal land where possible.

7. Support regional efforts to manage transportation infrastructure in response to states of emergency.

8. Participate in District of Columbia efforts to manage tour bus operations in the city, providing relief for District residents while accommodating tour industry needs.

9. Support the development of a water taxi or ferry type system serving the District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions to provide an alternative commuting mode. This should coincide with waterfront redevelopment opportunities and serve waterfront attractions.

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[15] 2011 Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Different types of transportation investments have different impacts on regional land use and travel patterns, emission of pollutants, and total capacity of trips accommodated. Regional smart growth objectives are supported by transportation infrastructure investments that encourage the most efficient use of existing transportation facilities; result in more compact and mixed-use development patterns; and require less frequent use of the private automobile. Efficiency of the overall transportation network, balanced investment, and maximizing choice among transportation modes should be federal goals. Policies that put transit first—funding transit improvements before roadway expansion and construction—will better manage regional transportation infrastructure capacities and improve regional air quality by shifting new vehicle trips to transit.

## POLICY SECTION H: Investment Priorities

The federal government should prioritize the following types of transportation infrastructure investment:

1. Fix it first: Support funding to maintain existing transportation facilities, with a further priority on transit, pedestrian, bicycling or other facilities that encourage the use of non-motorized vehicles.

2. Support funding to increase capacity, security, and multi-modal development of the regional transit system.

3. Support projects that provide improved transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and roadway access in existing, highly developed areas.

4. Extend the transit system's reach into developed, but underserved areas of the region.

5. Encourage the deployment of new "intelligent transportation" technologies that make more efficient use of roadway capacities.

6. Integrate transit services wherever possible.