

Climate Change Mitigation Planning

TPB Process

The TPB is currently not required to report greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for its long-range metropolitan transportation plan (LRTP) per federal regulations; however, the TPB had been involved with climate change mitigation planning since 2008.

- The TPB supported the development of the National Capital Region Climate Change Report (2008) by developing transportation sector emissions.
- The TPB completed its own scenario study on GHG emissions in 2010 and participated in a joint study with COG and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) in 2015-2016.
- Since 2010, the TPB has voluntarily reported estimated on-road GHG emissions (both absolute and per capita) as part of the performance analysis of the LRTP.
- Beginning with the Call for Projects for the 2015 LRTP, the TPB has included a question on the project submission form asking whether the project is “expected to contribute to reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases.”
- TPB staff provide on-road transportation sector emissions for COG’s periodic Metropolitan Washington Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Inventory.
- TPB staff, working with COG staff, provide data, as requested, to local jurisdictions to support their climate planning efforts.

What is New?

Since the last federal certification, in addition to continuing to provide support for some of the activities listed above, the TPB has undertaken significant action with respect to climate change mitigation. In June 2022, the TPB [adopted](#) on-road transportation-sector GHG reduction goals of 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050, which are commensurate with the region’s non-sector specific goals. According to staff research, the TPB, by taking this action, is the first MPO in the country to voluntarily adopt GHG goals for the on-road transportation sector. Part of the approval was adoption of seven GHG reduction strategies and identification of seven other GHG reduction strategies that have the potential to reduce on-road GHG emissions that merit further discussion by the TPB member jurisdictions. The goals and strategies are included on page 133 of the Visualize 2045 (2022 update) plan document.

The path to the adoption of these goals and strategies began more than a year and a half earlier. In October 2020, the COG Board [adopted](#) an interim GHG reduction goal of 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 to help set a course to the region’s long-term goal of 80% below 2005 levels by 2050, which was set in 2008. The COG goal addressed the need to incorporate equity principles and expand education on climate change to reach the climate mitigation and resiliency goals. The TPB [endorsed](#) the COG goal at its October 2020 meeting. COG’s Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) finalized the [Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Plan \(CEAP\)](#) in November 2020, which establishes priority collaborative actions for the region to work together to make progress towards the 2030 goal.

In late 2020, the TPB had numerous discussions on the role and responsibility of the transportation sector in achieving the region’s GHG goals. To answer questions that were being asked by the TPB, TPB staff commissioned a study, [the Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021](#) (CCMS), which was

led by the TPB's on-call consultant, to examine in more detail what strategies and actions could be taken solely by the transportation sector to help the region meet the multi-sector regional goals. The CCMS findings were presented to the TPB at a special work session and its regular meeting in December 2021. The CCMS did not show a realistic pathway to achieve either the regional 2030 or 2050 goal within the on-road transportation sector despite examining very aggressive groupings of strategies. Note, however, that the CCMS was more comprehensive than some similar studies, since it included both tail-pipe GHG emissions and GHG emissions from the electricity used to power electric vehicles.

The results of the CCMS left the TPB without a clear answer regarding the adoption of GHG reduction goals and strategies, and there were varied opinions on how to move forward. During the first half of 2022, TPB staff and the consultant provided additional information to support the TPB members' decision making. Additional work sessions on the topic were held before the April and May meetings before the goals and strategies were finally adopted in June 2022.

What is Next?

- The TPB plans to hire a new staff person to support air quality and climate change mitigation planning.
- The TPB is providing staff support to COG on the new Regional Electric Vehicle Deployment (REVD) Working Group.
- The TPB plans to work with COG to develop an electric vehicle deployment plan for the region.
- The TPB is considering seeking consultant support to review the seven GHG reduction strategies that were adopted for further consideration.
- TPB staff are working with the state DOTs to develop a process for coordination on project selection for the Carbon Reduction Program.
- TPB staff are monitoring the proposed rulemaking that could establish performance-based planning and programming targets for GHGs.