
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

April 15, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Charles Allen - DC Council
Brandon Todd - DC Council
Samuel Stephens - DC Council
Jim Sebastian - DC - DOT
Kristin Calkins - DC Office of Planning
Jason Groth - Charles County
Patrick L. Wojahn - College Park
Denise Mitchell - College Park
Ron Burns - Frederick County
Kelly Russell - City of Frederick
Neil Harris - Gaithersburg
Dennis Enslinger - Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordon - Greenbelt
Gary Erenrich - Montgomery County Executive Office
Deni Taveras - Prince George's County
Terry Bellamy - Prince George's County Executive Office
Victor Weissberg - Prince George's County Executive Office
Bridget Newton - Rockville
Kacy Kostiuk - Takoma Park
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. - Maryland DOT
Marc Korman - Maryland House
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Christian Dorsey - Arlington County
David Meyer - City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn - Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw - Fairfax County
David Snyder - Falls Church
Robert Brown - Loudoun County
Kristen Umstattd - Loudoun County
Pamela J. Sebesky - City of Manassas
Ann B. Wheeler - Prince William County
Victor Angry - Prince William County
Rene'e Hamilton - Virginia DOT
Shyam Kannan - WMATA
Sandra Jackson - FHWA-DC
Daniel Koenig - FTA
Julia Koster - NCPD

TPB/MWCOG STAFF PRESENT INCLUDES:

Kanti Srikanth
Chuck Bean
Lyn Erickson

Sergio Ritacco
Bryan Hayes
Abigail Zenner
Andrew Austin
John Swanson
Mark Moran
Andrew Meese
Tim Canan

1. VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Chair Russell called the meeting to order. She said that the procedures the board used at the March meeting worked well. She said that this meeting will follow the same procedures. She said the meeting will start with a roll call of members, followed by public comment. She said that she will forego briefings on Items 3 to 5 as the reports have been provided in advance, although there will be an opportunity for questions. She said that for the action items, after a motion has been made and seconded, she will open discussion state by state, and then open it up to WMATA and other member agencies. After discussion, she will call for abstentions and nay votes. The rest will be taken as yay votes. She reminded members to state their name before talking.

Ms. Erickson conducted a roll call. Members that were present are listed on the first page of this document.

Chair Russell asked if staff received any comments from the public.

Ms. Erickson said that one email was received. The comment was sent by Mr. Kandasamy.

Mr. Kandasamy, in his email, requested that slug lines and pickup locations be added to the Commuter Connections website, outreach, and promotional materials. He also asked that slugging information be added to Visualize 2045. He said that empty seats in private vehicles are the greatest untapped transportation opportunity in the country. He asked that Virginia and D.C. provide infrastructure for safe passenger loading and waiting shelters along I-95 and I-66.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 18, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Dorsey made a motion to adopt the minutes for the March TPB meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mitchell and approved by the board.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

There were no comments or questions about the Technical Committee Report.

4. CAC REPORT

There were no comments of questions about the Citizens Advisory Committee Report.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Srikanth discussed the United States Department of Transportation's announcement of the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economy Security Act (CARES Act). He explained that the federal funding included \$25 billion for the nation's public transportation systems to mitigate revenue losses and increased expenses resulting from actions taken to address the public health impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic. More details can be found on page 33 of the memo. He explained that the Federal Transit Administration has subsequently announced that it will distribute the funding using the existing formula funding program. FTA has identified that the National Capital Region will be using the urbanized

area formula. He said that the National Capital Region will receive more than one billion dollars. He explained that CARES Act money will not require a state or local match. He said that WMATA is the urbanized area designated recipient and all CARES Act money will consequently flow through the agency. WMATA has already begun communications with local transit operators and FTA about how to best distribute these funds.

Mr. Allen said that he was concerned that the current formula used to distribute funds might not provide sufficient economic relief to WMATA and the region. He asked for WMATA to clarify how much this formula would help alleviate anticipated financial difficulties of the future. He said that the TPB could send a letter to the region's congressional representation to help push for additional funds for WMATA to better reflect the needs of WMATA in the future.

Mr. Srikanth said that the TPB could work with local jurisdictions and WMATA to figure out estimates of their total financial needs. He said that the TPB staff could assist in drafting and sending a letter informing the congressional delegation of a need for larger amount of funding for the region.

Mr. Dorsey said that he did not understand why it was difficult to have a specific estimate of operating and revenue losses.

Mr. Srikanth said that the CARES Act funding will be used to address the revenue losses that have already been incurred, and that would continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that future revenue losses post current situation and attributable to the economic slowdown might not be covered by this funding. He said that while transit agencies could be able to project their average revenue loss there is uncertainty on when the crisis would end and the period of time of the economic slowdown or time for full recovery which would make estimating specific amount of losses a bit hard.

Mr. Kannan said that the priority is to make sure that they can continue to deliver lifeline services and the travel of essential workers. He said that it would be premature to offer a specific estimate of what their financial needs would be in the future. Meanwhile, they continue to reach out to regional partners to talk about the situation.

Mr. Wojahn said that he was concerned about the impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on the state budgets through the loss of gas tax revenue.

Mr. Allen made the motion asking TPB staff and officers to identify an estimate about future revenue losses and to consequently send a letter to the region's congressional delegation requesting additional support as Congress continues to consider financial aid and support to the jurisdictions and public transportation.

Mr. Snyder seconded the motion.

Mr. Wojahn made an amendment to the motion to include the revenue relating to the loss of gas tax. The motion was passed by the board.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Russell acknowledged that the current COVID-19 pandemic situation has had a significant impact on commercial, professional, and personal activities. She said it will have a significant effect on the economy and that without the ability to telework these impacts would have been even greater. Now that most employers in the region have been forced to utilize telework, TPB staff is looking at how they can collect information from workers and employers about teleworking so we can better understand how the current situation influences telework. We know that telework help reduce travel demand, fuel consumption, and emissions. She said that any findings won't be ready until later this year or early next year.

Chair Russell thanked the board for their roles in helping the region implement the stay at home order. She said that so far, we've learned that: (1) this virus is highly contagious and we are still working on a

proven medicine for this infection, and (2) the capacity of our public health system to treat all those infected is limited and importantly we have also learned that social distancing works and that by each of us doing our part we can help reduce the severity of this public health emergency. She thanked the board for doing their part. She said that working together, we will get through this.

ACTION ITEMS

7. PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO TPB BYLAWS

Ms. Erickson reviewed the proposed changes to the bylaws to allow for virtual meetings. She explained that MDOT offered some additional comments. The proposed changes were read as follows, "In the event of a state, local, or federal order, or pronouncement of emergency conditions that affect public safety or health, meetings may be held by telephone conference call, videoconference, or online video/telephone call combination at the direction of the chairperson or a vice chairperson if the chairperson is not available, after consulting with the other vice chairperson if possible, and the director of planning. If possible, three days' notice shall be given to the members by either email or telephone, which notice shall include the specific steps necessary to access the meeting. Such direction shall only be given upon the determination that a face-to-face meeting is precluded by a state, local, or federal order or pronouncement of emergency conditions affecting public safety or public health.

"Insofar as any such remote meeting will involve matters requiring a vote, the matters shall be proposed in writing and furnished to members at the time of notice of the meeting. The vote on any such matter shall be conducted in accordance with the requirement of Section 4(b)(iii)."

Mr. Lewis explained that MDOT supports amending the bylaws for virtual board meetings when health and safety concerns prevent an in-person meeting. He explained that they were requesting a chain of command for calling into a virtual meeting. He made a motion to adopt Resolution R17-2020 to approve changes to the TPB Bylaws.

Mr. Snyder asked Ms. Pandak if these changes comported with Virginia law.

Ms. Pandak explained that the TPB is not bound by Virginia Freedom of Information Act laws, nor is it bound by Maryland or the District's laws. She explained that to her knowledge there is no federal law that requires that a physical meeting or prohibits a virtual one.

Mr. Harris asked why the virtual meeting option was only in cases of emergency and not an option more often.

Ms. Russell noted that this was an interesting proposal but that for the task at hand it was important to allow for virtual meetings to address the current public health emergency.

Mr. Jordan seconded the motion.

Resolution R17-2020 was approved.

8. APPROVAL OF FY 2021 TLC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Ms. Koster said that the selection committee received proposals that respond to new technology, including a micro-mobility transit hub prototype in Arlington, and a project that assists those with impaired visibility move around transit stations in the Silver Spring area. She said that other proposals included plans to make existing roadways and infrastructure better, including the City of Fairfax's Hamburger roundabout and D. C.'s clover leaf up on North Capitol Street. She referred to Mr. Swanson to provide more details of the selected projects.

Mr. Swanson said that the TLC program has funded 130 projects that have totaled \$5 million in the 13 years that the program has been active. He said that the program uses consultant technical assistance to fund small planning studies and design projects. He explained that the program has different funding categories with different eligibility criteria. These categories include the core program funding in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which that is \$260,000 and is available to all jurisdictions; the Maryland Technical Assistance Fund in the UPWP which is available for Maryland projects only; and the Virginia Technical Assistance Fund in the UPWP for \$160,000 that is available to Virginia districts only. Additionally, the program for the first time this year will receive technical assistance funds from the UPWP for regional transit. From that category, the program will have \$177,266 to fund projects that enhance ped/bike access to high-capacity transit. This funding is for design work for projects that are ready to move toward construction and implementation. He said that this year that the solicitation process began in January and closed on March 9. The program received 21 applications that totaled \$1,280,000 in requested funding. He explained that 15 projects were selected with a total funding of \$857,266. Thirteen of these projects are in or near activity centers, 11 are in or near Equity Emphasis Areas, 12 projects are in or near high-capacity transit stations, and 8 of these projects are on or near key regional trails. He listed each of the 15 projects and described a few in detail. He explained that staff plans to begin the consultant selection process immediately, with the goal of starting the projects in early September.

Mr. Bellamy made a motion to approve the TLC technical assistance funding for FY 2021.

Mr. Lewis seconded the motion and the board approved the selection of TLC projects.

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE – TELEWORK ELEMENT

Mr. Ramfos said that in December 2018 the board adopted some program and policy ideas that would further the Aspirational Initiatives that were identified in Visualize 2045. He said that resolution encouraged Commuter Connections to enhance existing services with gamification and rewards, assist TPB member jurisdictions to increase participation in WMATA's SmartBenefits program, and to assist small and mid-sized employers to implement telework programs.

Mr. Ramfos referred to his presentation and described how the FlexTime Rewards Program, CarpoolNow, and incenTrip encourage behavior change through paid incentives. He said that Commuter Connections staff have worked with local jurisdictions and employers to promote SmartBenefits use. He said that results from this initiative are being examined as part of the Commuter Connections TDM Analysis Report that is expected to be completed later this year.

Mr. Ramfos described Commuter Connections work with employers to promote more telework in the region. This includes sharing promotional materials, like a poster, and a sample agreement that employers can use as a template. Additionally, Commuter Connections has a list of best practices for managers and a list of co-working centers in the region. He said that they've also updated the Alternative Work Schedule website to include more information. Mr. Ramfos said that right before the pandemic hit, Commuter Connections started promoting the resources they've made available for telework. He said that the region already has a high rate of telework, and that even spiked since the pandemic started.

Mr. Kannan said he appreciates the program and its professional administration. He said that there is not a lot of good information available, especially from Federal employers, about eligibility for telework and how often people telework. He asked if there was a role for the TPB to establish firm data on the numbers of working population in the region that telework and when they telework.

Mr. Ramfos said that Commuter Connections has a good working relationship with the federal

government, and that each federal agency is required by law to release data on telework. He said that Commuter Connections has additional data from the State of the Commute survey. He said that Commuter Connections also conducts a telework survey every three years.

Mr. Erenrich said that Montgomery County does a bi-annual employer survey about teleworking. He said results are shared with Commuter Connections.

Ms. Kostiuk asked if there are plans to use lessons learned from the pandemic to make the case to employers that teleworking is more doable than they originally thought.

Mr. Ramfos said that one of the goals is to be able to obtain enough information to inform future decisions.

10. SAFETY STUDY PHASE 1 ANALYSIS

Mr. Schermann presented the findings from the first phase of the safety study. The briefing presented the findings from a regional crash data analysis. It included data looking at the major factors in crashes leading to serious injury and death. The data included behavioral factors like not wearing a seatbelt, speeding, or impairment from alcohol or drugs. There was also data relating to crashes on different types of roadways like arterials and at intersections. Ms. Russell asked about finding out location data in individual jurisdiction to better address the problems.

Mr. Schermann explained that they do intend to get that data and create GIS maps for jurisdictions to use.

Mr. Groth noted the importance of getting location data to see where crashes are occurring in order to see how they can get help to make improvements. He explained that as an outer jurisdiction, one problem is that they don't have a very well-developed pedestrian network and they have an arterial running through the center of their county which is very heavily populated. He said there are a lot of people on foot, crossing in areas that they shouldn't. He said he thought that any information they can get will help them work with public works group as well as their own Department of Transportation to make improvements. He said he looks forward to digging a little deeper.

Mr. Erenrich wondered why Maryland jurisdictions had higher rates than the other jurisdictions and wondered if there was something structural going on.

Mr. Schermann responded that that was an important point and something that was the initial driver for the study. He explained that they hope to look into what kinds of crashes are happening there and then that may help point to some interventions.

Mr. Groth noted that two things stood out, one was the infrastructure and the other enforcement. He noted those things could vary between jurisdictions.

Mr. Schermann noted that this was the kind of thinking that staff have begun to engage in.

Mr. Lewis noted that a deeper dive will be needed to address these issues.

Ms. Taveras noted that there is a TLC project in her jurisdiction near a location with a high number of crashes and that the project will make it safer for pedestrians in the area. She also noted that the area is small, densely populated and has a high number of people walking. She was interested in finding new ways to work on education to help people in areas with large immigrant populations.

Mr. Weissberg asked about how equity and evaluation can also be added to the usual 4 "Es" of road safety. Traditionally people talk about education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services. Could there be an opportunity to ensure that equity and evaluation also be taken into account?

Mr. Schermann noted that there could be an opportunity to analyze this safety data through an equity lens on the regional scale by combining it with work that has already been done with TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas.

Mr. Snyder noted that a study like this had not ever been done in the region and he appreciated that TPB staff were taking it on. He posited that it could be useful to examine the functional types of highway with particular crashes that occur there along with behavioral factors that are specific to those types of roads. As a hypothetical example, he said that if a particular jurisdiction has a high rate of failure to wear seatbelts, that suggests engaging in an education campaign that should be general across the region but specifically important in particular areas. Such a campaign could enable movement toward interventions at the regional level as well as interventions at the jurisdictional level in the future, he explained.

OTHER ITEMS

11. ADJOURN

Mr. Ritacco announced that the public broadcast of the meeting had unexpected interruptions. He said that staff would work to get audio of the meeting posted as quickly as possible.

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.