
**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONTHLY REPORT TO THE TPB**

March 21, 2024
Ra Amin, CAC Chair

The March meeting of the CAC was held on Thursday, March 14. The meeting featured a “Getting (Re) Acquainted” round-robin in recognition of the first in-person meeting in a while, follow-up discussion on the TPB’s work on resiliency, and a presentation on the status of the public comment period for the development of the new regional transportation plan, Visualize 2050, now entering into outreach on technical inputs for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

DISCUSSION OF THE TPB’S TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCY PROGRAM

Katherine Rainone of the TPB staff completed the presentation that she started at the February meeting. She described the Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP), which is a federally required plan that the TPB is currently developing. She also spoke about a federal grant program—Promoting Resilient Operations for Transit and Construction Efficiency in Transportation (PROTECT)—which will fund projects to strengthen surface transportation to be more resilient to natural hazards.

Ms. Rainone demonstrated an interactive geographical mapping tool that identifies vulnerable transportation infrastructure. She explained that just the act of completing the vulnerability assessment, which is a required element in the TRIP, helps jurisdictions identify assets that are vulnerable and better position them for federal funding.

Ms. Rainone said that at the end of last year, staff conducted a solicitation for transportation resilience projects to include in the TRIP. The TPB received 26 projects submissions by the deadline of January 31. She noted the potential advantages of including projects in the TRIP. Projects that are ultimately awarded PROTECT grants and have also been included in the TRIP will be eligible for a reduction in the required non-federal match from 20% to 13%. She also noted that if the TRIP is included in the MPO’s long-range transportation plan, the match would be further reduced to 10%.

Member questions and comments included the following:

- Regarding the PROTECT grants, members expressed concerns that localities might not be taking advantage of this tremendous opportunity. Staff reassured committee members that jurisdictions have already gotten back to COG for round one of the grants, but there will be more rounds. Everyone agreed that it is important to get the word out about the opportunity, and if jurisdictions are not responding, we should find out why.
- How will the Visualize 2050 plan incorporate this information? Ms. Rainone emphasized that the TRIP will be explicitly included in Visualize 2050— both in the plan’s text and as an appendix. She reiterated that in order to gain a significant reduction in the match requirement for PROTECT funding, a project has to be in the TPB’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the long-range transportation plan. She said that staff will be updating the TIP submission form to include a question about resilience.
- Can Metro receive PROTECT grant funds? Staff said that yes, WMATA can apply. Twenty-six projects have been submitted, including bus shelters from WMATA.

- Where did the data come from for the vulnerability map? Staff said the data comes from publicly available data sources, such as the FEMA 100-year, and 500-year Floodplain maps. Each state and jurisdiction submitted data.
- When is the second round scheduled for the PROTECT grant program? Staff said the grant program hasn't released the dates for applications on the next round yet, but COG will be asking for submissions to the TRIP on a yearly basis. There are four more years of funding available through the grant program. It would be helpful for the CAC to educate their elected officials about the opportunity.
- A member expressed concerns about localized flooding, noting as an example, that the improvements around the Tidal Basin seem to have made the flooding worse. She suggested the construction of the wall adjacent to the monuments have exacerbated the tidal flooding.
- Suggestions for clarifying the presentation and mapping tool:
 - Don't assume users understand acronyms. For example, the term "Sea Level Rise" (SLR) should be spelled out.
 - The use of the icon and phrase "active transportation" could be misleading. Consider adding a pedestrian icon in addition to the bicycle.
 - Clarify what the Equity Emphasis Areas are to ensure users understand they are TPB-designated locations with high concentrations of low-income populations and people of color.

UPDATE ON PUBLIC OUTREACH RELATED TO DRAFT TECHNICAL INPUTS FOR THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS FOR VISUALIZE 2050 (NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN)

Cristina Finch, Transportation Planning Manager, provided information about the current public engagement activity for Visualize 2050, which will end on March 30. This outreach is focused on projects and other inputs that will be included in an analysis, which will be conducted later this year, of the plan's air quality impacts.

Ms. Finch provided information on where we are in the plan development process, noting we are in the comment period for regionally significant project inputs that could affect air quality, including information about how people can comment. Outreach efforts include the following:

- Ambassador kits
- Email announcements
- News Ads
- News releases
- Social media
- Web – Visualize2050.Org and mwcog.org\tpbcomment

She said the best ways to submit comments are via [the MetroQuest](#) form (en espanol), speaking to the TRB member directly, or speaking at the TPB meeting on March 21.

Committee questions and comments included the following:

- Regarding the mid-term future (2035), a member noted that there are significantly more road projects than transit in the list of project inputs. They suggested we should seek a more equal distribution of transit and road projects.
 - Staff responded that this conformity analysis is only looking at "one slice of the pie." There are other parts of the transportation plan that make up the

whole picture. The inclusion of projects in the TIP and the long-range transportation plan depends on a number of factors, including funding. Staff offered to do a briefing to educate committee members on the entire transportation plan, and how projects are prioritized.

- A member noted that the TPB’s travel forecasts should reflect WMATA’s current funding challenges. They noted that in past years, the inputs for the conformity analysis included a “transit constraint” that limited anticipated ridership because of past WMATA funding challenges. They noted that this constraint should be reimposed because current fiscal hurdles will not be resolved in time for this analysis.
- Members said that staff should be careful that the Metroquest site is accessible for people using different devices or browsers. Staff said they would check this out.

OTHER BUSINESS

- This was the first in-meeting led by 2024 CAC Chair Ra Amin.
- John Swanson of TPB staff reminded members that a new round of the TPB’s Community Leadership Institute would be conducted during three evening sessions on April 25, April 30, and May 2. He encouraged the newer CAC members to attend and to share the CLI application with their communities.
- Copies of the new *People’s Guide to Transportation Decision Making*, which updated the TPB’s Citizens Guide, were available at the meeting. Remote participants can expect to receive a hard copy in the mail or are free to download a copy. Members are encouraged to share this resource widely.
- Staff introduced Laura Bachle, who will be taking over from Mr. Swanson to staff the CAC.
- The committee is interested in inviting Kanti Srikanth back for a discussion about the role of the CAC viz. the TPB.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Ra Amin, Chair
Nancy Abeles
Timothy Davis
Christina Farver
Heather Gaona
Tafadzwa Gwitira
Zach Israel
Kalli Krumpos

Bernie LoCascio
Daniel Papiernick
Jeff Parnes
Lorena Rios
Rick Rybeck
Mark Scheufler
Gail Sullivan
Jacqueline Overton Allen
Richard Wallace
Maribel Wong

Staff

Rachel Beyerle
Lyn Erickson
Cristina Finch
Leo Pineda
Katherine Rainone
John Swanson
Laura Bachle