



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board Long Range Plan Task Force

FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
Ronald Milone, Travel Forecasting and Emissions Analysis Program Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Approach to Reduce the Initial Listing of Projects, Programs and Policies

DATE: April 19, 2017

The TPB has charged the Long-Range Plan Task Force and staff to formulate approximately 6 to 10 initiatives (projects, policies, or programs) that will complement the CLRP and will materially advance progress towards achieving the region's stated transportation goals. The 6 to 10 initiatives will be submitted to the TPB for acceptance in July 2017 and further evaluated in subsequent months. An initial list of approximately 40+ initiatives is currently in formulation by the Task Force. This memorandum presents a recommended approach to reduce and distill the initial set of initiatives to the desired range of 6 to 10. Staff recommends the use of differential approaches for motorized and non-motorized initiatives.

BACKGROUND

On March 29, the TPB adopted resolution TPB R16-2017 formally establishing the Long-Range Task Force. The resolution essentially continued the Board's ongoing efforts to identify unfunded projects, programs and/or policies that will materially improve the performance outcome of the region's transportation plan.

The most recent travel demand forecasts for the Washington, D.C. region indicate that the region is making progress towards achieving key policy goals: mobile source emissions are expected to decrease and the share of single-occupant vehicles is projected to decline. However, the TPB has long recognized that the performance of the region's long term (2040) transportation system, assuming its Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), will be less than satisfactory with respect to congestion levels and the transportation system's condition. The majority (about 80%) of the CLRP's funding will be dedicated to operations and maintenance, leaving a meager portion towards system enhancements. The TPB recently asked TPB staff to compile and evaluate expansion projects from member jurisdictions that were either unfunded or underfunded (and, hence, not in the CLRP). Staff determined that adding these 500+ projects to the existing CLRP would improve the future system's performance. However, the enhanced CLRP's performance would still be inferior to the existing system's performance with respect to congestion and the cost to implement the 500+ projects would be about \$100B.

The TPB acknowledges that the effort to fund and implement 500+ projects would be both impracticable and ineffective at improving the long-term mobility and accessibility needs of the Washington, D.C. region. The TPB established the Long-Range Plan Task Force to identify alternate initiatives such as programs and policies that would be individually, or in combination, regionally impactful. These initiatives would ideally complement the existing CLRP and, more importantly, would materially advance progress at attaining the region's stated transportation policy goals. The Task Force was charged to develop a limited set (6 to 10) of such multi-modal projects, program and policy proposals.

The Task Force first reviewed the regional transportation goals and adopted a set of previously identified challenges that the region faces in achieving these goals. Members of the Task Force have proposed 40+ projects, programs and policies that have the potential to impact future travel demand on the region's network and to improve the system performance. Additional ideas will be discussed at the April 19 meeting.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS: MOTORIZED INITIATIVES

The charge of the Task Force is to identify about six to ten initiatives that have the potential to improve the long-term system performance and make better progress towards achieving the region's transportation policy goals. The Task Force has currently compiled about 40+ initiative suggestions. Consequently, the challenge now is to winnow the 40+ suggestions down to 6 to 10. It is to be noted that, at this stage of the Task Force's work, there is no analysis of the various proposals that might provide a quantitative basis for selection. As such, selecting 6 to 10 proposed improvements from the 40+ suggestions must be based on a combination of lessons learned from past studies of similar proposals and/or professional assessment using the best available travel forecasts or observed datasets. Such an assessment will indicate the potential of the proposed strategy to relieve congestion, improve mobility, accessibility or, in other ways, address the challenges identified by the Task Force.

The proposed project selection process would be carried out in two steps: (1) combining the improvement themes and (2) qualitative assessment of the proposal's improvement potential.

Combining the themes of the proposal: The proposals to improve the transportation system's performance can generally be viewed as a project or a program or a policy initiative. There is significant experience to support the notion that combinations of projects, programs and/or policies, rather than single projects, are very effective at achieving desired outcomes. For example, a transit oriented development (TOD) strategy would be most effective when combined with projects that provide for adequate transit-way capacity supported by a program that maintains the transit system in a state of good repair. TOD options also are potentially enhanced by policies that discourage auto use such as increased parking costs. Combining some of the proposed projects, programs and policies into "bundled" strategies would not only be synergistic, it would also be a practical way to attain the Task Force's charge to arrive at 6 to 10 proposals.

Qualitative assessment of proposal's potential: The Task Force has generated approximately 40+ initiative proposals that Task Force members believe would result in more desirable travel behaviors and more effective usage of available capacity in the transportation system. Additional initiatives will be discussed at the April 19 Task Force meeting. Many of these proposals have not yet been analyzed, at any level, to quantify the proposal's potential to make a significant contribution towards addressing the challenges the region faces in achieving its goals. Such information would serve as a

sound basis to select a limited set of proposals for further analysis and/or TPB's endorsement as region's unfunded needs.

Past planning and or scenario analysis of similar projects, programs and policies can provide a sense of the scope of impact of these proposals. Staff has accrued a substantial body of scenario work over the past decade. This experience provides a solid basis upon which project assessments can be made. Similarly, current travel behavior data as well as travel systems data (locations of existing congestion, for example) can serve as a useful basis to assess the likely impact that proposed projects, programs or policies can have on travel behavior or congestion. Such data could come from travel monitoring programs and surveys (including US Census data). Additionally, forecasts of travel demand developed by regional and local agencies which are calibrated against existing conditions while accommodating planned improvements and assumed changes in travel behavior can serve as a useful basis to assess the likely impact the proposed project, program or policy can have on travel behavior or congestion. Information derived from the latest TPB travel demand modeling outputs are based on current land activity forecasts, policy assumptions, and forecasting methods. A substantial amount of data can be summarized (or mapped) at the jurisdictional level of analysis or at the Activity Center level of analysis, including:

- Land activity
- Travel flows
- Modal shares
- Highway and Transit "Screenline" crossings
- Congested travel time

This type of information can be considered as a basis for staff to make informed relative judgments about project or policy effectiveness.

The above approach is suggested for the Task Force's review and consideration during its April 19 meeting. Based on discussions at the Task Force meeting (and subsequent feedback) staff will finalize the selection process and develop a preliminary set of 6 to 10 initiatives for presentation to the Task Force at the May 24th meeting. Staff will use a "low-medium-high" impact rating matrix to indicate how well each initiative is anticipated to addresses the challenges identified by the Task Force. A finalized list of initiatives will be established by the end of May and will be shared with the TPB in June. The TPB will be asked to accept the final 6 to 10 initiatives at its July meeting and the Task Force will next proceed with further in-depth analysis of the initiatives. The analysis will more rigorously assess the effectiveness of each initiative with respect to the region's transportation policy goals.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS: NON-MOTORIZED INITIATIVES

Regarding proposed non-motorized projects staff recommends that the Task Force leverage the work already done by TPB's Committees and its member agencies. Given the relatively small scope of individual non-motorized projects, such improvements generally do not rise to the level of being able to affect travel patterns, mode or behavior at a regional level. However, a group of projects that provide improved connectivity and accessibility to key locations in the regional transportation network could have a measurable impact on regional travel.

To that end, staff recommends that the Task Force leverage the work activities of the TPB's Committees and its member agencies to develop a stand-alone pedestrian and bicycle package of improvements for the TPB to consider and endorse. This set of proposals would be independent of the six to ten improvements proposals that will be further analyzed by the Task Force.

Specifically, staff proposes development of the following two groups of projects:

1. A package of high-impact station-access improvements around Metrorail stations within Activity Centers

Pedestrian and bicycle projects near Metrorail stations can improve local access to Metrorail, the backbone of the region's public transportation network. By investing in local improvements that fill in gaps in the walking or biking network, as well as expanding facilities, residents throughout the region will have increased access to jobs and services. These relatively low-cost improvements have the potential to make a difference in transportation options, commute times, access to services and quality of life for thousands of people throughout the region.

Staff propose to work off WMATA's inventory of pedestrian and bicycle projects near Metrorail stations as identified in local jurisdictions' plans (this work built upon a 2014 TPB study funded through a federal TCSP grant). WMATA ranked the projects based on many factors, such as safety, prioritizing low-income areas, and the potential for increasing ridership. WMATA worked with jurisdictions' staff to narrow the highly-ranked projects to a limited list of projects that are likely to have a high-impact and be beneficial to the local community and the region.

Staff recommends taking WMATA's list of prioritized projects and cross-referencing it with Metrorail stations which are located within regional Activity Centers. The prioritized projects which fall in Activity Centers would make up the station-access improvement portion of the pedestrian and bicycle improvements for the 2018 LRP.

2. A package of high-priority projects to provide key connections between jurisdictions and between Activity Centers

Working with the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee and its Technical Committee, staff will compile a list of longer-distance bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve connectivity on a wider regional basis. These projects will be drawn from:

- The TPB's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, approved in January 2015
- The National Park Service Paved Trails Network Study, which is identifying approximately 100 projects that will enhance or complete that network
- The Regional Trails Coalition, which will develop a proposed regional trails network that will build on the proposed NPS network, but include non-NPS properties
- The Regional Bicycle Beltway Working Group which was formed to identify regional circumferential routes