
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

VIRTUAL MEETING
September 20, 2023

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Reuben Collins, TPB Chair – Charles County
Charles Allen – DC Council
Christina Henderson – DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Anna Chamberlain – DDOT
Sandra Marks – DDOT
Mati Bazurto - Bowie
Denise Mitchell – College Park
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
David Edmondson – City of Frederick
Emmett V. Jordon – Greenbelt
Brian Lee - Laurel
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County
Eric Olson – Prince George’s County Council
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Cindy Dyballa – Takoma Park
Heather Murphy – MDOT
Marc Korman – Maryland House
Nancy King – Maryland Senate
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Takis Karantonis – Arlington County
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Catherine Read – City of Fairfax
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County
Rob Donaldson- Loudoun County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Ann Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
John Lynch – VDOT
Maria Sinner – VDOT
David Marsden – Virginia Senate
Allisin Davis – WMATA
Mark Phillis - WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA
Dan Koenig – FTA
Laurel Hammig – NPS

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Andrew Meese
Nick Ramfos
Tim Canan
Mark Moran
Jeff King
Paul DesJardin
Leo Pineda
John Swanson
Sergio Ritacco
Rachel Beyerle
Christina Finch
Marcela Moreno
Deborah Etheridge
Kim Sutton
Andrew Austin
Andrew Bossi – MCDOT
Richard Wallace – Chair, CAC
Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning
Kari Snyder – MDOT
Maricela Cordova - MCDOT

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

Chair Reuben Collins called the meeting to order. He said the meeting was being conducted in a virtual-only format. He described the procedures for conducting the meeting.

Lyn Erickson conducted a roll call. Attendance for the meeting can be found on the first page of the minutes. She confirmed there was a quorum.

Lyn Erickson said that between noon on July 18 and noon on September 19, the TPB received 310 individual project comments from the Visualize 2050 initial project list feedback form and four comments via email. She said that staff was sharing the comments twice a month as they are being received, both at the Technical Committee and at the TPB. She thanked Fairfax County and Prince William County for hosting their own public outreach activities.

Lyn Erickson briefly summarized the rest of the comments that came in on the TPB meeting page. She said that Anne Havemann, general counsel for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, submitted a letter detailing comments about the TPB's greenhouse gas plan supporting Mr. Aburn's prior comments on environmental justice. She said George Aburn followed up on previous comments outlining his concern about environmental justice in transportation planning in the National Capital Region. She said that Jason Stanford, president of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, provided comments following up concerns he shared in-person at the July 2023 TPB meeting. She said that Bill Pugh, senior policy fellow for the Coalition for Smarter Growth, expressed concern about the lack of public engagement opportunities for the VDOT, MDOT, and DDOT carbon reduction strategies before they submit the carbon reduction strategies to the U.S. DOT. He also expressed concerns about the COG Round 10 cooperative forecast.

2. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 19, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Pam Sebesky moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Takis Karantonis. The motion was approved with one abstention from Ms. Read.

3. REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Referring to the mailout material, Mark Rawlings said the Technical Committee met on September 8 and reviewed three items for inclusion on the TPB agenda. These items were a briefing on the draft National Capital Region's freight plan, an overview of new federal funding programs for carbon reduction, and a briefing on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. In addition, he said the committee discussed six informational items. These items were a briefing on the regional electric vehicle planning efforts, a briefing on Visualize 2050, a briefing on the 2022 state of public transportation report, a briefing on the draft critical urban freight corridor designation update for the District of Columbia, a briefing on transportation inequities in disadvantaged communities, and a briefing on the upcoming vehicle probe data users group bottlenecks workshop.

4. REPORTS OF THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Presentations for both advisory committees referred to material that was posted in advance of the TPB meeting.

Richard Wallace, chair of the Community Advisory Committee, said the CAC met on September 14. The committee received two presentations from the staffs of the Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation about their funding and project privatization process. He said the committee expressed interest in how MDOT addresses accessibility, safety, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction in their goals and priorities. He said that both presentations elicited questions about funding related to projected budget shortfalls, the impact of inflation, and anticipated actions to address WMATA's funding needs.

Richard Wallace said the CAC also received an overview of the draft National Capital Region Freight Plan from TPB staff. He said the committee members discussed transportation policies and infrastructure that impacts freight and passenger travel, including freight restrictions on I 95, shared use of freight rail for passenger trains, and projects to rebuild tunnels to allow for full height and double-stack trains. The committee also asked about equity issues related to freight.

Christina Henderson, chair of the Access For All Advisory Committee, said the AFA met on September 18. The committee discussed the funding and project prioritization processes for Virginia, Maryland, and WMATA. The committee also received an update from Mohammad Khan, TPB's Enhanced Mobility program manager, about the 2023 solicitation process.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on September 18. He said the following actions were taken:

- The committee approved a joint letter from the TPB, MWAQC, and COG's CEEPC committee in support of a proposal by the National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) to the revise the average fuel economy standards for passenger cars, light duty trucks, and heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans.

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- The committee approved MDOT's request to have Commuter Connections expand the employer outreach service they provide currently to the rest of the state of Maryland.
 - The committee approved three sets of amendments to the TPB's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):
 - An amendment for District of Columbia's added approximately \$38 million to a new railroad bridge over New York Avenue in Northeast. It also reconciled its four-year plan funding outlays for a large number of projects and programs, about 50 different projects and programs.
 - An amendment for Maryland added about \$667,000 for a new study focused on areas of persistent poverty in Prince George's County and particularly to look for ways to improve traffic safety, storm water management, streetscape to discourage crime, and also importantly, to assess how to extend its bus rapid transit corridor to Prince George's County Community College. The amendment also adds about \$31 million for Prince George's County to purchase 20 zero-emission buses, battery electric buses, upgrade the electrical system at the transit depot, and also add electric chargers at multiple transit hubs.
 - An amendment for Virginia added approximately \$252 million for rail programs, \$239 million for in-state support for Amtrak services, approximately \$29 million for the city of Alexandria to purchase zero-emission buses and EV charging units at its bus facility, as well as funding for an ongoing project on Fairfax County Parkway.

Kanti Srikanth said the TPB provided six letters of support for its member agencies who are applying for federal grant applications.

Kanti Srikanth said the posted material included a letter from WMATA indicating renewed support for the Street Smart safety campaign. He said the packet included information about Car-Free Day. He said the packet included an announcement about a work session that will be held prior to the October board meeting on inter-city passenger rail travel. He said the packet included a memo about an upcoming TPB survey of the air passengers at the three major airports in our region. Finally, he said that Nicholas Ramfos, director of the TPB's Commuter Connections program, had recently been inducted into the Inaugural Hall of Fame of the Association of Commuter Transportation. He congratulated Ramfos on this recognition, which was described in the posted material.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Collins said the TPB is working on the update of the long-range transportation plan. He said the schedule for that update had been extended to accommodate work that needs to happen to address WMATA's financial challenges. He asked Clark Mercer, COG executive director, to speak about efforts to address the transit system's financial issues.

Clark Mercer said that COG's annual retreat focused on the fiscal cliff that WMATA is facing. He said that transit systems across the country are suffering from similar challenges due to a combination of factors, including inflation, loss of ridership to COVID, and escalating costs. He noted that in 2018 the region came together with the states and federal partners to inject more money into the capital flow for Metro. But he said that infusion from five years ago is inadequate today, and furthermore, he noted, it did not include funding for operating expenses.

Clark Mercer described several groups that have been put together to address WMATA's challenges. These include the Metro Strategy Group, which includes elected officials and representatives from the mayor's office and the governors' offices with the purpose of setting strategy, and the Cost Structure Group, which is focused on financial challenges and solutions. He noted that WMATA does have good news to share about ridership increases and improvements in customer satisfaction. He said the communications team at COG is

pulling together public information officers on a monthly basis to share information and to flag success stories. He said that in the coming months, he expects all of these efforts will develop a common understanding of the existing situation before leaders can start brainstorming and identifying long-term solutions.

ACTION ITEM

7. NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION FREIGHT PLAN APPROVAL

Chair Reuben Collins introduced Andrew Meese and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution R3-2024 to approve the National Capital Region Freight Plan.

Bridget Newton motioned to adopt Resolution R2-2024. Pamela Sebesky seconded the motion.

Referring to the handout materials, Andrew Meese stated that the TPB board received a briefing on the draft National Capital Region Freight Plan update in July, and a revised draft plan has been prepared based on received comments.

Meese said that TPB staff was not able to incorporate new safety information into the plan but pledges to work with committees on incorporating newer safety information. He noted that other COG and TPB activities are considering labor practices, workplace issues, delivery efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction, and safety. He said that staff plans to continue and amplify discussions on these topics at future freight subcommittee meetings.

Meese stated that information has been added about the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, Long Bridge, and air cargo volumes at National Airport. He said that the plan will adhere to current membership geography, and staff does not have an ability to enhance the graphics for this plan. He said that there was an update to reflect a recent TIP amendment for the Fairfax County Parkway.

Cindy Dyballa commented that the July minutes indicate that there was a discussion about greenhouse gas goals, efficiency, and renewable-related program efforts. She said that with 73 percent of freight volume being on the roads, the topic is an important area, and she asked for clarification as to whether the topic would be pursued in the freight committee.

Andrew Meese said that the TPB's approach is to take cues from the dedicated planning resources the TPB has on greenhouse gas. He said that the freight committee's work is going to be in coordination with and reflective of the TPB's overall work program.

Kanti Srikanth said that COG and TPB have ongoing work activities on developing inventories of greenhouse gases by sector, and the TPB will look into how best to identify greenhouse gases from freight vehicles with non-freight vehicles. He said that work is part of an ongoing greenhouse gas inventory that would be reflected in the freight plan and not something that the freight subcommittee will be doing separately.

Kanti Srikanth said that TPB members may recall that there was a proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enact specific greenhouse gas emission standards for trucks on which the TPB provided comments of support.

The motion to adopt Resolution R3-2024 was approved unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8. NEW FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAM FOR CARBON REDUCTION

Referring to the presentation materials, Erin Morrow provided an overview of new federal funding programs under the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that are dedicated to shifting the United States away from fossil fuel use and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. She stated that the five programs in her presentation have the potential to reduce on-road transportation GHG emissions.

Erin Morrow said that the new programs are the Carbon Reduction Program, the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program, the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program, and the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program. She noted that the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program has existed for several years but has received increased funding under BIL. She said that all five programs will invest over \$20 billion nationally over five years.

Erin Morrow stated that the Carbon Reduction Program asks state departments of transportation (DOTs) to develop a statewide strategy for reducing on-road carbon emissions and provides funding for states to implement eligible projects and programs to reduce on-road transportation emissions. She said that documents are due by November 15, and the program provides \$6.4 billion in formula funding nationally from FY 2022 through FY 2026 and that if funding levels for the region remain consistent over the five years of the program, the region will see an investment of over \$60 million.

Erin Morrow said that the state DOTs are scheduled to present their draft reduction strategies to the TPB Technical Committee and TPB Board in October 2023.

Erin Morrow said that the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program is an economy-wide program that is for the on-road transportation sector but also energy, buildings, and waste. She said that the CPRG program has a \$250 million noncompetitive planning grant stage and a second stage that will provide \$4.6 billion in competitive implementation grants. She said that COG will receive \$1 million for pre-planning work for the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) that will include development of a Priority Climate Action Plan due in March 2024. Projects included in the Priority Climate Action Plan will be considered for the competitive implementation grants.

Erin Morrow reported that the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure discretionary grant program will strategically deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling. She said that COG submitted a request for funding on behalf of seven jurisdictions for 48 proposed locations. She said that in addition to COG, proposals were submitted by the District of Columbia, City of Alexandria, Prince William County, Montgomery County, and the Maryland Clean Energy Center. She said that of the 48 sites in COG's proposal, 30 of those sites, or 63 percent, are located either in or near disadvantaged communities.

Erin Morrow stated that the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula program provides funds to strategically deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected network to facilitate data collection access and reliability. She said that NEVI requires states to develop a statewide plan to be updated annually and initial plans were submitted in August 2022.

Erin Morrow stated that the Low or No-Emission Vehicle Program received additional funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for an amount of \$1.22 billion in FY 2023. She said that FY 2023 grants included Low-No awards for WMATA, the University of Maryland, City of Alexandria, and Loudoun County. She noted that the TPB supports applications by agencies in the region through support letters and makes amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program to ensure the receipt of federal funding.

Kanti Srikanth stated that this is the first year of a five-year period of funding for states and local governments under these new programs and there will be more opportunities for TPB members to conceive of and to work to procure funding to implement strategies based on the climate change mitigation study conducted by the TPB in 2021 – 2022. He noted that in October the TPB will hear from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia about their statewide strategies for reducing greenhouse gases.

Takis Karantonis asked whether COG would monitor the rate of absorption once a set of projects is going on and to see how these projects change or translate into goal attainment of the COG and TPB greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Kanti Srikanth stated that COG and TPB are working in partnership to develop GHG inventories for each sector for member jurisdictions and the entire region. He said that with new funding, in particular the carbon reduction program, there is a federal requirement for monitoring and reporting of projects implemented with the funding. He said that TPB staff will work with the states to document estimated emissions reductions of projects.

Takis Karantonis stated that he would like at some point on the implementation timeline to say that money was well invested because it enabled the TPB to come closer to its goals. He stated that a significant policy assessment needs to be done, and the funding investment can be transformative in some places.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB has heard from the state DOTs that they are thinking that they can use the money as leverage with other funding to advance projects earlier so that emissions benefits can be availed sooner. He said that if \$3 million dollars per state can be leveraged with additional funding that the state or local jurisdictions were planning to implement and advance greenhouse gas reducing strategies, the region might have greater bang for the buck. He said that the TPB will need to keep track of how it is leveraging the funding and how soon projects are able to be implemented.

9. CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT (CPRG) PROGRAM

Referring to the Item 9 presentation, Jeff King provided a briefing on the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program. He said that the CPRG grant program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) out of the Inflation Reduction Act and provides grants to states, regions, and local governments to develop plans, and ultimately projects, to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants. He stated that the EPA released a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity on September 20 with a due date of April 1.

Jeff King said that in order to be eligible for the \$4.6 billion in competitive grants, projects must be included in a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP). He said the PCAP is due March 1, 2024. He noted that noncompetitive allocations to the states and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are also available. He said that of the \$3 million allocated to the District of Columbia for the state-level plan, \$1 million of the funding will be passed on to COG for management of the MSA-level plan which includes counties that are outside the COG footprint.

Jeff King said that COG needs to identify priority measures and will look at the Low-Income Disadvantaged Community benefits analysis because there is a federal program requirement to focus on benefits and justice for these communities. He said the program will have significant public engagement. He stated that under EPA requirements, COG must demonstrate that the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), due later in the grant program process, will lead to net zero GHG emissions by 2050.

Jeff King stated that the CCAP requires additional analyses such as looking at co-benefits analysis and workforce planning analysis, and the EPA is also looking at how grantees leverage other federal and state

funding programs. He said that the jurisdictions COG will work with on the plans include the Virginia counties to the west of the region—Jefferson County in West Virginia, Warren County, and Clarke County and to the south and west counties—Culpeper, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and the City of Fredericksburg.

Jeff King said that next steps include seeking nominations from the Chief Administrative Officers of COG-member jurisdictions to represent jurisdictions on a steering committee and reaching out to agency staff to invite participation on a technical committee. He stated that COG is already coordinating with the state DOTs and plans to kickoff the program in October 2023 along with outreach to non-member governments.

Kanti Srikanth said that the \$4.6 billion in discretionary grants will be available for any project including transportation projects; however, the project will need to be included in the PCAP due March 1, 2024. He said that as TPB members are working with their transportation agencies to identify what projects and programs can be implemented at the local level, and it will be important to bring forward project or program ideas related to the CPRG program study within the next four to five months and include those in the plan document. He commented that if the projects are not included, it may be difficult for projects that are conceived of later to receive some of the federal grant funding.

10. COG ROUND 10 COOPERATIVE FORECASTS OF POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS, AND EMPLOYMENT

Referring to the agenda materials, Paul DesJardin presented an overview of the COG Round 10 Cooperative Forecasts explaining that the key takeaway is that these are the official growth inputs that will go into the air quality conformity analysis of Visualize 2050 and are the inputs used on a regular basis in all TPB transportation models and assessments. He said that the COG Board of Directors approved the forecast in June 2023.

Paul DesJardin said that a key element of the forecast is that each local government member prepares projections for individual traffic analysis zones. He said that the steps for developing the forecast include looking at national and global economic conditions, and COG provided base year employment and housing data to local planning departments. He said that the near and long-term impacts of COVID were reviewed with the support of a consultant to look at a range of trends based on the COVID pandemic and prior pandemics, potential changes to future average household size, commercial space utilization, and housing growth and cost.

Paul DesJardin noted that COG continues to monitor office vacancies, return to office practices, and transit utilization on a regular basis. He said that at the date of the forecast, office occupancy was about 37 percent of pre-pandemic, and since the beginning of 2023, the occupancy rate has been about 47 or 48 percent.

Paul DesJardin said that ICF, COG's consultant, found that the household size figure is projected to decline for the region moving forward. He said that jobs growth is projected between a minimum of 3.6 million jobs to a maximum growth of just under 4.3 million jobs. He stated that the baseline growth for population is about 6.8 million people, and household growth show a range from a low of 2.25 million to a maximum of under 3 million for the region.

Paul DesJardin said that the region anticipates adding more than a quarter of a million jobs in professional and business services over the next 30-year period, and 75 percent of all wage and salary jobs expected by 2050 will be in professional business services, educational, health, and all other services. He said that steady growth in the workforce population of 25- to 44-year-olds is anticipated, and there is expected to be a 64 percent increase in the age 65 and older population.

Paul DesJardin presented a summary of the forecasts and said that there will be about a million more jobs over the next 25 years by 2050 and an addition of 1.5 million people and approximately 700,000 households. He said that there is an expectation of 200,000 fewer jobs than projected for 2020. He commented that in terms of trends by individual jurisdiction, the District of Columbia has more jobs than any other jurisdiction in the region and expects to gain about 236,000 jobs over the next 30 years followed by Fairfax County, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. He said that Fairfax County is the most populous jurisdiction in the region with just under 1.2 million people in 2020 followed by Montgomery County with approximately 1 million people. He noted that Prince George's County is expected to have the highest population growth over the 30-year period, Fairfax County has the greatest number of households, but the District is expected to see the greatest increase in number of households over the next 30 years.

Kanti Srikanth said that what was presented is the official projections for the region and what TPB will bring to the board in February 2024 as the inputs will be used to develop the air quality conformity analysis for Visualize 2050. He said that TPB members have noted that some of the projections are sobering, but one of the purposes of the forecast is to encourage the TPB members to think what interventions may be needed in policy and infrastructure investment.

Brian Lee asked if there is still time when jurisdictions can send in their information. He stated that he thinks it would be relevant to see the job projections growth for the northern end of Prince George's County and the Laurel, Maryland, area.

Paul DesJardin said that the Park and Planning Commission in Prince George's County prepares the small area projections, and he will circle back to see how they have coordinated with the municipalities in the county.

Brian Lee said that it is important because the City of Laurel's growth rate has been substantial and is projected to substantial moving forward.

Cindy Dyballa asked what the difference in household sizes between suburban Maryland and suburban Virginia is based on and how will the projections double back to other COG goals specific to housing.

Paul DesJardin said that that average household size data comes from individual jurisdictions, and the assumptions are made through the permitting process in terms of what types of units are coming online. He said that based on trends the jurisdictions are seeing through census data, school enrollment figures, and other data sources, the jurisdictions make assumptions about current and future average household size.

Paul DesJardin said that COG benchmarked housing targets to a prior set of cooperative forecasts and this is how the calculations arrive at the 2030 housing targets. He stated that when the forecast information was shared with the COG board, he shared that the region is well below the housing production targets set in 2019. He stated that the pandemic affected the cost of materials and provided supply chain challenges, and COG is aware of how that affects housing cost, housing availability and what that does for the region on a national competitiveness level.

Walter Alcorn thanked staff and said that he is aware that assumptions and data are coming from planning staff across different departments and agencies, yet jurisdiction staff say that the COG model is driving the forecast, so sometimes the assumptions that go in the model do need to change and be updated, and Fairfax County appreciates COG staff for monitoring because it is important.

Paul DesJardin commented that local government staff are engaged in the process, and that is really the strength of the process.

11. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 P.M. The next meeting will be on October 18, 2023.