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## **TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

October 6, 2023

### **1. WELCOME, VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, AND MEMBER ROLL CALL PROTOCOL**

Staff described the procedures and protocols for the hybrid meeting and conducted a roll call. Meeting participants are documented in the attached attendance list.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MEETING RECAP FROM THE OCTOBER 8 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

There were no questions or comments regarding the September Technical Committee meeting. The summary was accepted as final.

## **ITEMS FOR THE BOARD AGENDA**

### **3. TRANSIT WITHIN REACH PROGRAM GRANTS**

Ms. Nham briefed the Committee on the projects recommended by the Transit Within Reach's (TWR) selection panel to receive technical assistance in fiscal year 2024. The program provides up to \$85,000 in technical assistance for preliminary design or engineering projects focused on improving pedestrian and bicyclist access to high-capacity transit stations. This year, \$250,000 in funds from the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was available for the program. A selection panel consisting of representatives from the TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee, TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, and TPB staff identified the following three projects to receive technical assistance:

- Fairfax County, Prosperity Avenue Safety Project (\$80,000)
- City of Gaithersburg, Olde Towne to Washington Grove Shared-Use Path (\$85,000)
- Washington, D.C., 9th Street NW Sidewalk (\$85,000)

No comments or questions were received for this Item. The projects will be presented to the TPB at its October 18 meeting for approval.

### **4. CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM – STATE CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

Ms. Erin Morrow provided an introduction for this item. She said that today, the state DOTs would brief the committee about the Carbon Reduction Strategies (CRS) that they are required to develop by November 15 as part of the federal Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). States are required to consult with MPOs as they develop their strategies, which means they should consider views and periodically inform them about actions taken. TPB staff have shared the TPB's greenhouse gas reduction goals and strategies with state DOT staff. The presentations would focus on the strategy requirement of the CRP. The committee will be briefed on the other CRP component, project funding, as the project selection process for each state is developed.

Mr. Kiernan, Ms. Belt, and Ms. Cross provided an overview of the Carbon Reduction Strategy for MDOT, VDOT, and DDOT, respectively.

A member asked how VDOT's strategy is balancing the decrease in vehicles with traffic flow improvements given how traffic flow improvements induce demand. Ms. Belt said that VDOT is not taking the stance that one strategy is better than another given the differences in MPOs in the state. She said that congestion management and mitigation is available as a strategy and increasing

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multimodal travel opportunities and decreasing single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips are important. The committee member followed-up by asking if the state was leaving it up to the MPOs to decide whether inducing demand through congestion management improvements is worth the carbon cost because they are going to off-set it some other way. Ms. Belt responded that that was a more complicated question than she could answer in the presentation today. She said that they are not saying that the funding cannot be used for congestion mitigation. She said that some of the things that she thought the committee member was referring to in his question are unable to be fixed with a policy so she does not think that there will be any policy that fewer vehicles must be on the road because of congestion management. The cultural shift in terms of multimodal transportation and electric vehicles, which are not zero-emission but are low emission compared to internal combustion engines, needs to occur. VDOT is leaving the prioritization of which strategies are most important up to the MPOs.

Mr. Brown asked how those in Virginia could evaluate and monitor the benefits of strategies that are implemented. Ms. Belt responded that VDOT is looking at available analysis tools including the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) toolkit and MOVES4. VDOT's Air and Noise Program staff conduct emissions modeling statewide. MPOs that do their own emissions modeling coordinate with that office to ensure that they are using consistent inputs. VDOT is considering additional tools, such as one being developed by Georgetown Climate Center (currently in beta format), which unfortunately is not usable on a project level, but is a tool that could be used to capture emissions from a statewide perspective. VDOT has reached out to Georgetown Climate Center with feedback on the tool noting some of Virginia's analysis needs that are not available in the current version of the tool.

Mr. Malouff noted that at the same time as this meeting, there was another meeting taking place about changing Virginia's funding policy through Smart Scale to make carbon reducing strategies harder to build by changing the policy to make highway expansion more important than other strategies in Northern Virginia. He asked Ms. Belt what connection her office had with the Smart Scale office in the development of the CRS, if any at all. Ms. Belt responded that there is no connection, unfortunately at this time. There is no direct correlation between Virginia's work related to the CRP and the decisions that are being made through Smart Scale at this time, although Smart Scale decisionmakers are aware of the CRP requirements. At this time, Ms. Belt's office is taking the approach that coordination with the MPOs and what they are asking for and need is the most important approach to draft the CRS and how that works its way into the Smart Scale process remains to be seen. She said that was all of the information she had at this time, and she understood Mr. Malouff's concerns about potentially conflicting policies from a centralized agency.

Mr. Srikanth thanked Ms. Belt for her presentation and noted in response to Mr. Malouff's question that the CRS should not just be for MPOs. It is a statewide strategy document that is intended to inform state's funding decisions. He noted in the TPB area, the MPO has no role in any funding decisions for Virginia projects; therefore, he understands and supports Mr. Malouff's question. Ms. Belt agreed that VDOT intends the CRS document to be for everyone. Mr. Srikanth followed that Ms. Belt had said that VDOT was designing the CRS to be as unrestrictive to MPOs as possible; however, the TPB does not have a role in funding decisions; therefore, it becomes important for the TPB to hear that the Commonwealth Transportation Board will consider the CRS as a guiding document as well. Second, Mr. Srikanth noted TPB staff have not seen a draft of the statewide document even though it was requested. Therefore, it would be very hard for him as the staff director to tell the TPB that they can endorse the draft document if staff have not seen it. Ms. Belt responded that VDOT is still drafting the document. Mr. Srikanth noted that MDOT has sent a draft document to TPB staff and has accepted feedback. He said that staff is especially interested to see how the TPB's work on climate change is integrated and referenced in the statewide document. He noted that the TPB adopted strategies and goals related to greenhouse gas reduction.

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Mr. Srikanth thanked Ms. Cross for her presentation. He said he had the same comment for the District as he did for Virginia. TPB staff have not yet seen DDOT's draft CRS document and would really like to see what is in the statewide strategy document and how informed it is of the TPB's work and activities related to climate change mitigation. Mr. Erenrich asked about the list of options and actions. He asked how the much-discussed reduced fare and free fare fit in to the CRS. Ms. Cross responded that reducing fares would fall under the goDCgo initiative.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **5. VISUALIZE 2050: COMMENTS ANALYSIS, TRANSIT INPUTS, PIT INPUTS, AND OTHER UPDATES**

Marcela Moreno, Andrew Austin, and Jane Posey all presented Item 5 using one continuous set of slides. Meeting participants asked questions between each presentation.

Marcela Moreno presented a summary of the comments received from the ongoing Visualize 2050 public comment period. The public comments included in the summary included feedback received from February 15 – August 31, 2023, and focused on exempt projects with over ten comments or non-exempt projects with over five comments.

Bob Brown suggested including additional geographic information for context, noting that some projects, such as the US 50 Improvement project, cross over various local and state jurisdictions. He also asked if there is an expectation for jurisdictions to respond to comments. Ms. Moreno agreed that additional geographic information would be helpful for future summaries. Lyn Erickson added that this comment period is intended to supplement agency's re-examination and input of projects for Visualize 2050, and agencies will be asked to provide a general response. Kanti Srikanth noted that the extension of the Visualize 2050 schedule resulted in a longer comment period, and that agencies should utilize the monthly report of comments to inform their proposed project inputs. Ms. Erickson noted that this comment period is not a statistically significant surveying effort. Bob Brown also added that some projects may not be in the update because they are already completed. Gary Erenrich noted that the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project was almost complete, and that comments suggested confusion with the Maryland Op Lanes Phase 1 project. He further emphasized that these projects were included in Visualize 2045 and may have changed or have been completed.

Andrew Austin presented the schedule for submitting project inputs for the Visualize 2050 plan and the FY 2023-2026 TIP. He stated that all regionally significant projects to be included in the air quality conformity analysis must be submitted by December 29, 2023. He noted that following that deadline, non-regionally significant projects could be submitted through June 28, 2024 and that inputs for the development of the FY 2026-2029 TIP were due by January 25, 2025. Mr. Austin provided the committee with the definition and examples of regionally significant projects. He contrasted this with the definition of the word "study" and asked committee members to reconsider its use in project titles that would be included in the conformity analysis for construction.

Regina Moore stated that in Northern Virginia, projects would be submitted once the localities had signed off on their review of the project records and VDOT had also had a chance to review, adding that the submissions should begin soon and that Virginia transit agencies would be submitting their projects independently as well.

Christine Hoeffner asked for clarification on which projects were to be considered as studies and those that should be included in the conformity analysis. Mr. Austin stated that after having gone through the financial analysis exercises to determine projects (or project studies) for which funds had been identified as "reasonably expected to be available", those would be the projects included

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in the conformity analysis for construction. It was only projects for which funding had not been fully identified that would be considered as studies.

Jane Posey asked the group to review a document posted with meeting materials. The document lists detailed transit network coding assumptions associated with transit projects in the 2022 update to Visualize 2045. Ms. Posey asked the group to make any updates to transit assumptions for projects being input into the Project InfoTrak (PIT) database for the air quality conformity analysis of Visualize 2050. She noted that the deadline for these inputs is March 1, 2024.

Mr. Brown asked if existing transit inputs are needed. Ms. Posey replied that existing transit inputs are not needed and that the future transit will be built upon an existing transit service base of October 2023.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

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Ms. Jane Posey informed the Tech committee that MWAQC approved the new Motor Vehicle Emissions budgets associated with MOVES 3. The State Air Agencies will submit the new mobile budgets to EPA for approval. The region will use these mobile budgets in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

Eric Randall spoke about the planned TPB work session scheduled to occur just before the October 18th TPB meeting. The work session will start at 10:30am. There will be a panel of 5 subject matter experts/leaders who will talk about Intercity Bus and Rail for the National Capital Region.

Andrew Austin reminded agencies to please turn in any requests for letters of support for local grant applications as soon as possible. While we can't put your project application in the TIP, we can amend the TIP immediately upon award - and that can happen in about 30 days.

Andrew Meese informed the Committee that the Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicyclist Outreach Campaign is about to be underway. TPB has traditionally started with a kickoff event graciously hosted by our member agencies. This year, the event date is Wednesday October 25 at 11 AM and our host jurisdiction is Fairfax County. This year's location will start at Vienna Metro Station parking lot. The campaign is anticipated to run from October 23 to November 19. There is a testimonial wall that was developed a few years ago showing all participants' testimonies. There is budget for about 6 events this fall, and the program can also accommodate others when additional funding or jurisdictional support is available.

Tim Canan mentioned that starting on October 8, for two weeks, the TPB's Air Passenger Survey is being conducted at all three airports: BWI, DCA, and IDA. The survey is typically done every two years. We have not done the survey in the past two years because of COVID. It is very important if you see someone conducting these surveys please participate.

Tim also mentioned that he and other staff members had an exciting time at AMPO (Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations). Several TPB staff moderated sessions.

Staff Updates: We have a newly hired Transportation Engineer named Bahar Shahverdi. She has a PhD in civil engineering from George Mason University. She will be working closely with Feng Xie and several other staff members.

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**ATTENDANCE - Hybrid**

<b>MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT</b>	
Mark Rawlings – DDOT (in person) Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County (virtual) David Edmondson – City of Frederick (in-person) Brian Fields – City of Gaithersburg (virtual) Bob Brown - Loudoun County (in-person) Rob Donaldson – Loudoun County (in-person) Brian Leckie– City of Manassas (virtual) Regina Moore – VDOT (virtual) Hannah Pajewski – NVTA (virtual) Christine Hoeffner – VRE (virtual)	Jonathon Parker – WMATA (virtual) Sophie Spiliotopoulos – NVCT (virtual) Hannah Pajewski -NVTA (virtual)
<b>OTHERS / MWCOG STAFF PRESENT</b>	
Lyn Erickson - in person Kim Sutton – in-person Dusan Vuksan – in-person Sergio Ritacco – in-person Eric Randall – in-person Paul DeJardin - Virtual Marcela Moreno – in-person Erin Morrow Virtual	Janie Nham - Virtual Leo Pineda – in person Tim Canan – in-person Mark Moran - Virtual Rachel Beyerle – in-person John Swanson - Virtual Katherine Rainone – in-person Andrew Messe – in person