



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lori Zeller, TPB Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Assessment of Major New Projects Against TPB's Endorsed Aspirational Initiatives of Visualize 2045
DATE: January 16, 2018

This memo follows up on the Transportation Planning Board's endorsement of five initiatives to be included in the aspirational element of Visualize 2045. TPB staff have assessed the connections between projects submitted for the fiscally constrained element of Visualize 2045 and the five endorsed initiatives. The memo is organized by the five endorsed initiatives: each section gives a brief overview of the initiative followed by analysis describing whether and how major new projects submitted for inclusion in the constrained element help fulfill the board's call for action on the initiatives.

It is important to keep in mind that the TPB endorsed initiatives as concepts, so the analysis below describes how the planned projects are connected to those concepts as well as what else needs to be done in order to help fulfill those concepts throughout the region. The assessments are summarized in Table 1.

OPTIMIZE REGIONAL LAND-USE BALANCE

Description

This initiative would optimize the balance of jobs and housing region-wide. The idea is to increase jobs and housing around underused rail stations and Activity Centers with high-capacity transit. Plus, it would encourage building additional housing in the region to match employment projections.

Connection to Major Projects Submitted for Constrained Element

This initiative is not focused on transportation infrastructure projects but rather on achieving a balanced distribution of jobs and housing throughout the region and adding more housing to the region. None of the major projects proposed to be added to the constrained element of Visualize 2045 explicitly address future land-use assumptions. The COG Round 9.1 Cooperative Forecast (the most recent land-use forecast which will be utilized when analyzing the future performance of the constrained element) assumes that much of the new housing and jobs in the region will be located in regional Activity Centers. In the following months a more detailed analysis will compare the land-use assumptions in the Round 9.1 forecast to the aspirations of this endorsed initiative.

REGIONWIDE BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) AND TRANSITWAYS

Description

BRT, light rail, and streetcar routes that are in jurisdictions' plans but not yet in the TPB's long-range plan would be added at various locations throughout the region. This initiative would also improve pedestrian access to transit stations and increase the amount of jobs and housing around the transit stations.

Connection to Major Projects Submitted for Constrained Element

There are four BRT routes submitted by Montgomery County for inclusion in the constrained element that directly support this initiative (projects #7, #8, #9, and #10 in Table 1). These BRT routes will connect riders to and from local bus routes and Metrorail, providing faster and more reliable trips via transit. The regional BRT initiative endorsed as part of the aspirational element encourages BRT systems to operate fully in dedicated right-of ways, which these four BRT routes do not entirely do.

The dedicated bike lanes submitted by DDOT complement this initiative by providing safer and more reliable access to transit via non-motorized modes (this complementary relationship is not reflected in Table 1).

METRO RAIL CORE CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS

Description

This initiative includes running eight-car trains exclusively on all Metrorail lines—replacing six-car trains entirely. It would also add a second Rosslyn station, and a new rail line across the Potomac River connecting the District and Virginia through Georgetown to Union Station towards Waterfront. It also would add better bicycle and pedestrian access to rail stations.

Connection to Major Projects Submitted for Constrained Element

Expanding capacity on Metrorail by running all 8-car trains during peak hours and making capacity improvements to stations in the core (project #14 in Table 1) directly supports the Metrorail core capacity initiative. Other aspects of the Metrorail core capacity initiative which are not covered in this project include a new loop line and the new Rosslyn station and tunnel.

The dedicated bike lanes submitted by DDOT complement this initiative by providing safer and more reliable access to transit via non-motorized modes (this complementary relationship is not reflected in Table 1).

EMPLOYER-BASED TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Description

New policies would increase teleworking regionwide and increase the number of employees receiving transit and carpool subsidies. This initiative would also increase the price for most of the parking for work trips in Activity Centers.

Connection to Major Projects Submitted for Constrained Element

There are no new major funded projects, programs or policies proposed for including in the fiscally constrained element of Visualize 2045 that relate to this initiative (such as programs or policies affecting parking pricing, enhancing telework, or incentivizing transit use through employer-provided subsidies). Analysis of the fiscally constrained element of Visualize 2045 will reflect the current level of rideshare, employer-provided transit subsidies, parking pricing and rates of telework in the region, which are enhanced by the robust regional travel demand management program (Commuter Connections) as well as similar programs implemented by jurisdictions and the private sector.

REGIONAL EXPRESS TRAVEL NETWORK

Description

The region would have an extensive network of express toll lanes on existing highways. These lanes would use dynamic tolls to maintain desired travel speeds and be free to carpoolers and transit vehicles. New express bus service connecting Activity Centers would also travel on the network.

Connection to Major Projects Submitted for Constrained Element

VDOT submitted a project to add HOT lanes on a portion of I-495 North (project #11 in Table 1), which fully supports the initiative: it proposes express toll lanes with free travel for high-occupancy vehicles (HOT lanes) and express bus service will run on the express lanes as introduced by a previous project.

MDOT has proposed projects to expand roadway capacity along I-495 and I-270 by adding dynamically-priced toll lanes (projects #2 and #3 in Table 1), which support this initiative by adding express toll lanes to highways which currently do not have them. At this time, these projects do not include express bus service to connect Activity Centers nor do they allow for HOVs to travel for free in the express lanes, both of which the initiative calls for. However, future transit service additions are possible and decisions about HOV tolls could change. MDOT has indicated that these features will be considered as part of the project development activities.

TABLE 1
VISUALIZE 2045 TECHNICAL INPUTS AND THE
TPB'S ENDORSED ASPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES OF VISUALIZE 2045

Major Projects*	<i>Optimize Regional Land-Use Balance</i>	<i>Regionwide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Transitways</i>	<i>Metrorail Core Capacity Improvements</i>	<i>Employer-Based Travel Demand Management Policies</i>	<i>Regional Express Travel Network</i>
1. Dedicated Bike Lanes	○	○	○	○	○
2. I-270 Toll Lanes	○	○	○	○	●
3. I-95/I-495 Toll Lanes	○	○	○	○	●
4. US 301	○	○	○	○	○
5. MD 201	○	○	○	○	○
6. MD 97	○	○	○	○	○
7. Randolph Road BRT	○	●	○	○	○
8. North Bethesda BRT	○	●	○	○	○
9. MD 355 BRT	○	●	○	○	○
10. Veirs Mill Road BRT	○	●	○	○	○
11. I-495 HOT Lanes (North)	○	○	○	○	●
12. I-95 Southbound	○	○	○	○	○
13. US 15	○	○	○	○	○
14. Metrorail Capacity	○	○	●	○	○

* Major projects are defined as changes to interstates, major arterials, and expressways or freeways with at-grade intersections, as well as dedicated transit facilities

- **Project fully supports initiative**
- **Project supports initiative but has one or more components missing**
- **Project not related to initiative**