
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

June 19, 2019

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Martin Nohe, Chair – Prince William County
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria
Charles Allen – DC Council
Monique Anderson-Walker, Prince George’s County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Terry Bellamy – Prince George’s County Executive
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Ron Burns – Frederick County
Allison Davis – WMATA
Dennis Enslinger – Gaithersburg
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Dannielle Glaros – Prince George’s County
Evan Glass – Montgomery County
Jason Groth – Charles County
Rene’e Hamilton – Virginia DOT
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg
Catherine Hudgins – Fairfax County
Sandra Jackson – FHWA – DC
Shyam Kannan – WMATA
Kacy Kostiuik – Takoma Park
Christopher Lawson – FHWA – DC
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Ron Meyer – Loudoun County
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Jeannette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Jim Sebastian – DDOT
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
David Snyder – Falls Church
Dolly Turner – DC Council
Andrew Trueblood – DC Office of Planning
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Tim Canan
Chuck Bean
Andrew Meese
Brandon Brown
Deborah Etheridge
Jackie Sellman

Abigail Zenner
Jane Posey
Jon Schermann
Martha Kile
Stacey Cook
Michael Farrell
Dusan Vuksan
Charlene Howard
Sarah Bond
Adrianna Koudounas
Matthew Gaskin
Eric Randall
Gregory Grant
John Swanson
Ken Joh
Rob Jackson – Citizens Advisory Committee
Jane Lyons – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Ken Fealing – Storm Center Communications
Maria Sinner – VDOT
Norman Whitaker – VDOT
Mike Lake – Fairfax County
Paolo Balita – Prince William County
Nancy Abeles – CAC
Champe Burnley – VA Bicycling Federation
Jeffrey Miller – Cycle Life HQ
Eric Brenner – MD Bike/Ped Advisory Committee
David Brickley – September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance
Kari Snyder – MDOT – TSO
Will Pines – MDTA
Allison Davis - WMATA
Bill Orleans – Public Observe

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON TPB PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES

Mr. Brenner, chair of the Maryland Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, encouraged the TPB to not approve MDOT’s requested TIP amendment to for the Nice/Middleton Bridge Project until the board learns whether or not the bridge will include barrier-separated bike lanes.

Mr. Burnley, president of the Virginia Bicycling Federation, referred to a letter that was shared with the board. He said the letter called for a separated bike lane on the Nice/Middleton Bridge. He said the letter is endorsed by Bike Maryland, the League of American Bicyclists, the East Coast Freeway, and the Coalition for Smarter Growth. He said it is important to think about how the bridge will be used in 50 years.

Ms. Lyons, from the Coalition of Smarter Growth (CSG), said that his group supports D.C. submissions for TIP amendments, including the expanded network of bike lanes. She said that CSG urges the region to move more quickly to convert lanes to dedicated bus lanes. She said CSG is concerned about the roadway widening in Virginia’s amendments, and that MDOT is not effectively studying alternatives as part of proposed toll lanes. CSG also supports a separated bike lane on the “Nice/Middleton Bridge.”

Mr. Miller, vice-president of North America for Cycle Life HQ, said that his groups works with communities to help promote themselves as destinations for bicycle tourism. He said that the group has been working with Charles County. He said having a barrier separated bike lane would open up access to the county for tourists and residents. He said the that Woodrow Wilson bridge is a good example.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 15, 2019 MEETING

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 15 TPB meeting.

Mr. Meyer seconded the motion.

The motion was approved. There were abstentions from Ms. Sebesky, and Mr. Angry, and Ms. Rishell.

3. REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Rawlings said that the Technical Committee met on June 7. At the meeting the committee was briefed on the draft findings and recommendations for the Bus Transformation Project, the biannual update of the Transportation Improvement Program, and MDOT's TIP amendment to request for the "Nice/Middleton Bridge" project.

Mr. Rawlings said that the committee was also briefed on Prince George's County's Driving it Home campaign to raise awareness about driving safety and Virginia's long-range statewide multimodal Transportation plan, called VTrans. There was a briefing on the Transit Vision's Strategic Examination of Transit and the DASH bus system in Alexandria. There was also a briefing on the progress of the VA-7 Leesburg Pike Bus Rapid Transit Project.

4. REPORT OF THE CAC

Mr. Jackson said that the CAC met on June 13. He said that the committee was briefed on board discussions on transportation safety. He said that the CAC agrees with the board's desire to have aspirational targets that exceed federal standards for safety. He said that the committee was also briefed on the regional travel survey. The committee also discussed with staff ways that the committee can be helpful ambassadors for implementing Visualize 2045. He referred to the CAC report and summarized the discussion. He said that the committee talked about aligning with elected officials, attending community meetings, and collaborating with other advisory groups in the region.

5. REPORT OF STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Srikanth said that the Steering Committee met on June 7 and approved one amendment to the TIP that was requested by MDOT to provide about \$8.5 million in federal and state matching funds for MARC's rolling stock and replacement program. The amendment also provides about \$25 million in federal and state matching funds for MARC's state of good repair. The amendment also adds about \$4.3 million in state funds for intersection improvements in Prince George's County. The amendment does not affect the regional air-quality conformity analysis or the financial constraint of Visualize 2045. Details can be found on pages 3 to 16 of the director's report.

Mr. Srikanth said that letters sent and received contain a letter from the Virginia Bicycling Federation on behalf of ten other organizations in Maryland and Virginia pertaining to the TPB's advocacy for providing bike/pedestrian accommodation across the Nice/Middleton Bridge. The letter is on pages 19 and 20 of the report. On page 21 there is a copy of the TPB's letter to the FTA in support of DDOT's application for \$84 million in bus facilities grant program. This funding is intended to support a \$104 million project to build an operations and maintenance facility for all of DC's Circulator buses. On page 23 there is a copy of the TPB's letter supporting Prince George's County's application for a State of Maryland Transit Innovation grant. The grant would serve two activities: one to advance the county's feasibility study of key transit corridors, and another to develop a micro-transit plan for the county.

Mr. Srikanth said announcements and updates includes a memo reporting on the status of work activities that the board directed staff to take regarding the aspirational initiatives. The memo has information on the work done to date and the next steps. More detail can be found on pages 27 to 32. There is a memo on the status of work activities related to the aspirational initiatives and expanding the National Capital Trail Loop. Details are on pages 33 to 34. Pages 35 to 26 summarize the TPB's

dockless bike and electric scooter share workshop, and pages 39 to 40 summaries proceedings of the TPB's annual forum for public transit operators and private transportation providers. Pages 41 to 50 summarize the activities related to WMATA, including Metrorail station closures in Alexandria. The memo includes a description of the assistance that is provided by TPB and COG staff. There is a memo reminding jurisdictions in Virginia that the deadline for the Transportation Alternatives Program is July 1. Details from this memo are on page 51 to 52. Finally, on pages 53 to 54 there is a letter from the COG board expressing support for a bill that is currently in the U.S. Congress, calling to extend the state of good repair federal contribution to WMATA for another ten years at \$150 million per year, which would be matched by DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The bill proposes that the federal government add an additional \$50 million towards WMATA's state of good repair needs.

Mr. Srikanth said that a consultant was selected for the in-depth safety study on roadway fatalities in the region. He said that the TPB was selected by the FAA to receive a \$175,000 award for evaluating the TPB's air passenger survey.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chair Nohe introduced Mr. Angry who is Prince William County's newest supervisor and now sits on the TPB. He encouraged the board to keep discussion moving so that there would be plenty of time for the last item on the agenda.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CERTIFICATION REVIEW FOR THE WASHINGTON REGION

Mr. Lawson thanked TPB staff, the board, and regional partners for participating in the federal certification review process. He said that the FAST Act requires that FHWA and FTA jointly certify the adequacy of the transportation planning process in the designated transportation management areas. He said that the federal team conducted the on-site review on April 10 and 11, 2019. These on-site visits included meetings with staff and the Citizens Advisory Committee. He said that there are three federal actions that the review team can use when evaluating the performance of the MPO: corrective actions, meaning the MPO has failed compliance; recommendations, meaning the MPO meets compliance but improvements are suggested; and commendations meaning the MPO exceeds expectations.

Mr. Lawson summarized select findings. He said that the review found that the TPB meets federal planning requirements. There are several areas where the TPB is pro-active and innovating in fulfilling the requirements of the transportation planning process. He said that the review team was impressed with the process used to develop Visualize 2045, including the use of a task force to develop aspirational initiatives. He said that the team observed an increased level of communication and extensive coordination between TPB and agency partners. He said these relationships are strong and productive. He said that the TPB is commended on strong regional coordination and cooperations. He said that other commendations are for the all of the tasks associated with the transition to a performance-based programming and planning process. The environmental justice analysis and the Equity Emphasis Areas also received commendation.

Mr. Lawson said that there were some recommendations. He said that the report recommends that the Memorandum of Understanding between TPB and FAMPO should be updated to align with current FAST Act requirements. He said the report recommends that for the FAMPO region outside of the TPB TMA area that includes only the northern Stafford County portion, FHWA and FTA review FAMPO's planning process as part of a joint planning finding during the review and approval of the Virginia STIP by FHWA and FTA.

8. BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT: DRAFT STRATEGY

Mr. Davey said that congestion, affordability, and mobility are major problems in the Washington region. He said that buses provide one way to address these challenges going forward. He said that since 2012 bus ridership in the region has decreased by about 13 percent. He said that the study did not address paratransit or rail. He said that the strategy that the draft study that has been shared with the board draws on survey results from almost 9,000 people. He said there have been public open houses, regional pop-up events, in addition to interviews. He said that the goal is to complete the strategy recommendations then develop a road map. He said this road map will be very detailed about where, how, and when the region should accomplish the goals and recommendations. He said that the vision was to make bus the mode of choice for the region's roads by 2030, serving as a backbone of a strong and inclusive regional mobility system.

Mr. Davey referred to the draft strategy and summarized the recommendations: 1) making sure providers are customer focused, 2) making buses a priority on the major roads, 3) making buses as convenient as possible, 4) rebalancing local and regional provider responsibilities, 5) streamline back office functions and share innovations, and 6) creating a regional stewardship to transform the system. More details on each of these recommendations can be found in the strategy report.

Ms. Kostiuk said that she found the open house to be very useful. She asked about the vision for the recommended task force and about the role that the TPB might play on that body.

Mr. Davey said that the steering committee for the transformation project are sensitive to creating another entity responsible for transportation, land-use, and planning in the region. He said that maybe it is worth considering a committee that already exists at the TPB to help with convening activities, like the bus subcommittee.

Ms. Kostiuk said that she sees a connection of this project with some of TPB's aspirational goals in the long-range plan. She suggested that TPB consider how best it can assist.

Mr. Glass said that Montgomery County will expand bus access for every resident under 18, allowing all kids to ride free. He said that will start on July 1 on Ride-On and Metro buses. Rereferring to the recommendation to rebalance local and regional services, he asked if the idea was aimed at possible redundancy of efforts or cost savings, or to allow more flexibility within the entire service area? Mr. Davey said that informal analysis showed that there is potentially \$20-25 million across the region in total operating savings that could be realized by rebalancing the local and regional services which could be reinvested in more service. He said that some jurisdictions feel that local service can be more flexible.

Mr. Glass said he would like to stay on top of this and try to figure out who ultimately would help make some of these decisions should it move forward.

Mr. Allen said that it is important to look at this from a customer perspective and specifically the ease at moving across the system. He said that bus prioritization is important, especially when it is buttressed with increased frequency. He said that regional buy-in is very important. He said that getting collective buy-in on it is so important and that he believes the jurisdictional responsibility is going to be one of the hardest nuts to crack, yet it is an important part of this. Mr. Allen wondered if there is a place for the TPB collectively to try to take a crack at providing feedback as a body? He said that one of goals for this would be to help secure regional buy-in which he believes would be consistent with the aspirational goals the TPB had identified.

Mr. Davey suggested prioritizing three to five recommendations that the Board believes are the ones that could either be the quickest wins or the ones that have the most consensus.

Mr. Allen asked about the timeline.

Mr. Davey said that the WMATA board will be briefed on the strategies in July. He said the final report is planned for September.

Mr. Allen noted while it would be a quick turnaround, he volunteered to help staff draft a letter. He said that he recognized that WMATA was seeking input from the DOTs and elected officials of WMATA's members. He also said that there might be value in the TPB speaking as a body, since we are trying to implement this idea as part of region's long-term goals.

Chair Nohe said a good starting point would be the strategies that align with the aspirational initiatives.

Mr. Lewis said that MDOT recognizes the importance of this project and that they are coordinating with Montgomery and Prince George's County.

Mr. Snyder said that this study is overdue. He said that in order for these strategies to be implemented there needs to be a way to coordinate funding, look for gaps, and plan for change. He asked what structure might operationalize this and account for the economic and political realities at the local and regional level.

Ms. Hudgins said there is an opportunity to get a better understanding for where the jurisdictions are and what they are doing in terms of local service.

Ms. Glaros asked about the strategy to adopt consistent priority guidelines across all jurisdictions.

Mr. Davey said that this strategy is purposefully broad and not deeply defined. He said that the county and state DOTs control signal systems, roadway access, etc. He said that coordination should happen with the DOTs.

Ms. Glaros asked about how the transformation project accounts for equity, in particular pockets of populations with high-reliance on bus transit.

Mr. Davey said that affordability is an important issue. He said that almost 2,000 people who identify as low-income responded to the survey. They said eliminating the bus-to-rail penalty would be helpful. He said that there is an opportunity to explore on-demand service, dial-a-ride, and other non-traditional solutions to better serve communities in need.

Ms. Glaros said it would be good to integrate the discussion of equity into the presentation.

Chair Nohe said that at the regional level the board looks at this as a mobility and transportation connectivity issue. At the local level there is more of a discussion about equity and providing a service. He said that the goal should be to get people out of their single-occupancy-vehicles.

Mr. Davey said that at its core transportation is about time and money.

Chair Nohe asked Mr. Srikanth to provide a framework for the board's feedback. Mr. Srikanth said that he would work with Mr. Allen and the officers and staff on a draft.

NOTICE ITEMS

9. BRIEFING ON INPUTS TO THE FY 2021-2024 TIP AND THE 2020 AMENDMENT TO THE VISUALIZE 2045 PLAN AND AIR-QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS SCOPE OF WORK

Ms. Posey that staff are starting to develop the FY 2021-2024 TIP and an amendment to the Visualize 2045 long-range transportation plan. She said that this update requires the TPB to run an air-quality conformity analysis. She said that next month the board will be asked to approve the inputs and scope of work for the analysis. She said that in December there will be a deadline for financial updates to the TIP. In January the conformity analysis will begin. In February, the board will be briefed on the new TIP and the results of the conformity analysis. A public comment period will run from January 31 to March 1. Also, in March the board will be asked to adopt the TIP and amend Visualize 2045.

Ms. Posey referred to the handout and said it includes a table of projects and changes to Visualize 2045. She said that brand new projects are highlighted yellow. She summarized the significant projects,

including seven miles of new bike lanes and the K Street Transitway in DC, the modification of Beltway HOT Lanes and new ramps on the Dulles Toll Road in Virginia. There are no significant changes proposed from Maryland. She referred to a letter from Maryland that described a process for getting input and selecting alternatives to be included in the future.

Ms. Glaros asked for more context about the process and specifically the type of decision-making that comes from this ultimately.

Ms. Posey said that because the region does not meet federal air quality standards it needs to run an air-quality conformity analysis to show the impacts of the projects in the transportation plan and TIP on air quality. She said that this analysis has to be done every time there is a change to the projects in the plan or TIP. She described the process in more detail.

Ms. Glaros asked about MDOT's letter and projects that already in the plan and TIP.

Ms. Posey said that MDOT's letter is saying that MDOT is not making any updates to its TRP project at this time. While it is unusual to write a letter about no changes, MDOT has decided to give this letter to document recent actions on the project by its Board of Public Works and to raise awareness about what is going on with the TRP project.

Ms. Glaros asked to clarify that the MDOT is proposing to leave their element the same, but that it might be changed in the future.

Ms. Posey said that is correct.

Ms. Glaros asked if there was a timeframe.

Mr. Srikanth said that in terms of project development there is no particular timing and it depended on MDOT completing its NEPA study. He did say that there is a regular schedule that the MPO maintains for updating its air quality conformity analysis. He said that every four years the long-range plan is updated, and that the TIP is updated every two years. He said that all changes to the projects would have to be part of this update. He said that there can be exceptions when the update is done in interim years.

Mr. Kannan asked about the model used for the air-quality conformity analysis. He wondered if switching from the MOVES 2010 model to the MOVES 2014 model moved the goal post so that everything could be in conformity. He said he wants to know if the projects are actually doing what the region hopes they are, which is to provide more mobility at a greater level of environmental stewardship.

Mr. Srikanth said that he would answer more fully offline. He said that the MOVES model is for emissions analysis and its use is federally prescribed. With regard to emissions reductions from specific projects, he said that the TPB does emissions analysis at the regional level for all projects, not on an individual project level. He said that at the project level emissions analysis is dictated by NEPA guidelines.

Mr. Lewis said that the purpose of the letter was not to address conformity, but to make sure that MDOT is providing the information to the entire TPB so everybody is on the same page.

Mr. Glass asked about page B3 of the MDOT letter. He asked about how MDOT plans to reconcile the difference between HOV and HOT lanes.

Ms. Posey said that the conformity analysis counts all trips in HOV and HOT lanes as toll trips.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE MARYLAND "NICE/MIDDLETON BRIDGE PROJECT" RELATED TO THE DEFERRED MDOT TIP AMENDMENT

Mr. Lewis described MDOT's approach to building the Nice/Middleton Bridge. He said that MDOT has a complete streets policy and that the most recent update to the Maryland Transportation Plan also has documents and language promoting multimodal transportation.

Mr. Pines said that the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) owns eight tolled facilities in the state.

He said the MDTA has eight members and a chair, all of whom are appointed by the governor. He said that the Nice/Middleton Bridge is in a rural area and has about 18,800 trips on an average day. He said that the bridge is near major facilities, like the Morgantown Power Plant and the Dahlgren Navy Base. He said that the plan is to build a new bridge at a parallel crossing to the existing bridge. The new bridge will require about one mile of new highway construction. He said that the bridge will have a navigable span and a clearance so that tall ships can go north. He said that these accommodations meant that the bridge will have a steeper grade than the current bridge. He said that the new bridge described two alternatives in procurement documents. One provides an option for cyclists to share the right lane with automobile, allowing motor vehicles to pass on the left. The second alternative is to provide an eight-foot wide barrier separated bike path, or shared-use path. He said that the procurement allows for firms to propose an alternative technical concept. He said that the process is closed, and he cannot share any more details about specific proposals at this time.

Mr. Pines said that he understands that the board has concerns about the lane sharing. He said that the new bridge would include bicycle-compatible bridge joints. He said that a similar bridge uses ITS equipment and signs to notify drivers when a cyclist is using the lane. He said that another crossing over a damn has an eight-percent grade and that there have not been any incidents with cyclists in five years. He said that Virginia is contributing \$13 million for improvements on the Virginia side of the crossing. He said that another alternative would be utilizing the old bridge for bicycling and fishing. Another option is providing a service to drive bicycles across the bridge.

Mr. Lewis said that MDOT is requesting a TIP amendment for FY 2019-2024 to add \$186 million in construction funds. He said that this is a time-sensitive amendment, given that 30 percent could be funded with TIFIA loans. He said that MDOT expects to receive the technical proposals in July and the price proposals in August. He said that value selection will take place over the fall and be awarded in December 2019.

Mr. Groth referenced the Charles County comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2016. He said that the plan calls for development near the bridge, so that the area may see significant change in the future. He said that projects for trips over the bridge by 2035 might be as high as 40,000 a day. Much higher than the 18,000 mentioned by MDOT. He said that the comfort of cyclists will degrade as traffic volume goes up. He said that Charles County remains strong in their belief that the bridge should have separated bike lanes. He said he appreciates the desire to cut costs but reminded that the bridge is expected to last 100 years. He said that retaining the old bridge is not an option because of the high maintenance cost. He urged MDOT and MDTA officials to meet with elected officials in Charles County.

Ms. Newton supported Mr. Groth's comments. She said it makes more sense to do it right the first time.

OTHER ITEMS

11. ADJOURN

No other business was brought before the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.