

March 2, 2023

Mr. Mark Rawlings  
TPB Technical Committee Chair  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear TPB Tech. Comm. Chair Rawlings and members,

As stakeholders in the region's transportation projects and planning, we applaud the TPB for providing a public comment opportunity at the start of the long-range plan update during the project review and submission stage. To enable the public to participate meaningfully and understand the projects under consideration, we respectfully ask that the TPB and its member agencies provide some additional resources and opportunities for the public to interact with agency staff:

- 1. Provide project sponsor agency email contacts and hold meetings for members of the public to ask informational questions on projects early in the technical inputs solicitation process**

To facilitate informed comments by the public to decision makers early in the process, TPB should provide a staff point of contact or points of contact for each project sponsor agency. TPB member agencies should also provide public meetings to allow for question & answer and public input. This second point was requested last month in this [letter by 39 organizations to the TPB board](#).

Many projects listed have little information provided (even in Appendix B) and some appear to conflict with other planned agency projects and priorities. **For example,** Virginia Funded/Committed project grouping in Fairfax County listed in row 85 as simply "VA 7" includes three separate CLRP road improvement projects. The project descriptions in Appendix B of Visualize 2045 have short or very general descriptions of the projects. The three projects, each complete by 2030, would make changes to parts of the planned Route 7 BRT corridor and Tysons area, including road widenings and an interchange reconstruction, but the descriptions make no mention of the Route 7 BRT project, any planned pedestrian or bicycle improvements, or any improvements to Metro station access, which are County priorities. Thus, for a project grouping like this, it would be very helpful for the public to be able to ask questions of and receive timely answers from the appropriate agency staff.

- 2. Provide additional project information and clarification on TPB Visualize 2050 webpage**

TPB's Visualize 2050 and Get Involved webpages, while providing background documents on the Zero-based budgeting process, could also provide basic information on projects, like regional maps of projects. Much of this information is readily available elsewhere in TPB documents but should be added to the Visualize 2050 webpages. For

example, TPB has this [interactive Visualize 2045 project map tool](#) that it could use, (with some corrections to outdated project info). It would also be helpful for TPB to provide simple instructions on how to find project information in Appendix B of Visualize 2045 (for example, someone can't search via the linked webpage, rather they have to download the PDF first to search by project number) - otherwise the public has to scroll through 300-plus page documents.

**3. Modify the comment form to allow users to comment on additional planned projects that agencies may propose for Visualize 2050 based on local or state plans, but that the public may not support including in the Visualize 2050 CLRP**

As structured, the comment form only allows users to propose additional projects for inclusion in Visualize 2050, and there is not a space to provide comment on other proposed member agency projects not in the Visualize 2045 constrained plan that could potentially be submitted to Visualize 2050 but that the public may oppose.

**4. Amend the public FAQs document statement on road expansions and GHG emissions because the FAQ response omits important information**

CSG and 38 organizations already commented on this issue in our letter to the TPB Board ([see p. 7, #2B](#)). At last month's TPB board meeting, Director Srikanth responded that this FAQs document was prepared to answer member agency questions to TPB staff. But now we find it being used as the primary source of [background information for the public](#). The omissions in #6 in this document should be corrected to provide the public with complete information regarding how [road expansions typically increase greenhouse gas emissions](#) due to induced demand. This context, in addition to noting the variation among individual projects, is particularly important given TPB's strong adopted climate target.

**5. Ensure the three workshop meetings of TPB staff with member agencies at the end of March are fully open to public participation**

We request that the three agency workshop meetings (TPB staff w/ DC, MD, VA members) are open meetings for the public, with advance notice and availability of meeting materials to the public. We kindly ask that TPB staff compile and provide Visualize 2050 public comments received up to the meeting dates to the member agencies, with a summary also given by staff at the meeting. If time permits, we hope that members of the public can also provide live comment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill Pugh, Senior Policy Fellow, and Sonya Breehey, Northern Virginia Advocacy Manager  
Coalition for Smarter Growth

Mark Scheufler and Allen Muchnik  
Co-Chairs  
Active Prince William