



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Charlene Howard, TPB staff
John Swanson, TPB staff
SUBJECT: Transit Within Reach – Release of a Draft List of Transit Access Focus Areas
DATE: May 29, 2020

The TPB's Transit Within Reach project has identified a regional list of Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs) which have been determined to be opportune locations for improving pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. Staff identified the TAFAs through an iterative process of regional analysis and local input beginning in the spring of 2019.

Staff will present this list to the TPB Technical Committee on June 5. Staff will brief the TPB on the list at its meeting on June 17. The TPB will be asked to approve the final list of TAFAs on July 22.

The draft list is at the end of this memorandum.

OVERVIEW

Visualize 2045, the long-range transportation plan approved by the TPB in 2018, identified "Improving Walk and Bike Access to Transit" as one of seven regional initiatives that can positively affect travel conditions in the future. The plan noted that there are still too many station areas in our region where people drive to transit because walking and biking are too time-consuming, too unpleasant, or too unsafe. Visualize 2045 said that investments to remedy these conditions should be considered regionally significant because they will not simply serve local circulation needs but will also improve access to regional transit systems, including Metrorail, commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.

Following the approval of Visualize 2045, the TPB determined that the next step in moving this initiative forward should focus on providing geographic specificity to the concept. In December of 2018, the TPB directed its staff to identify a prioritized list of transit station areas that offer significant opportunities for improving pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit. Based on this directive, TPB staff launched the Transit Within Reach project to develop a list of "Transit Access Focus Areas" (TAFAs) through a process of 1) regional analysis and 2) outreach to our local government member jurisdictions.

Last year, TPB staff developed a preliminary list of TAFAs and met with jurisdiction staff to discuss the list. Staff has now revised the methodology and the final list of station areas based on comments received from our members.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The methodology for developing the list of TAFAs is summarized below. This approach was modified and refined during an iterative development process that sought to be as responsive to local needs and interests as possible.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF A BASELINE LIST FOR ANALYSIS

The starting point for this analysis was the development of a baseline list of station areas that were selected according to the following criteria:

- **Stations deemed “high-capacity transit” plus selected bus-only centers:** The baseline primarily includes “high-capacity transit stations,” which are defined by the TPB to include Metrorail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, light rail, and streetcar lines. Based upon requests from our members, the baseline also includes a supplemental list of eight high-frequency, bus-only transit centers that either 1) are served by a large number of bus line (eight or more) and/or 2) have high ridership (more than 5,000 daily riders).
- **Cutoff year:** The analysis is considering stations that are currently built or will be in place by 2030, according to the Constrained Element of Visualize 2045. (In early stages of this analysis, staff used a cutoff year of 2025, and at the request of our members, we extended it to 2030.)
- **Activity Center designation:** The baseline only included station areas that are within a half mile of one of the region’s 141 Activity Centers.

B. USE OF KEY FACTORS TO ANALYZE THE BASELINE AND SEEK JURISDICTIONAL INPUT

Staff conducted regional analysis and conducted outreach using the three key factors described below to identify station areas where it is difficult to walk/bike and where there is current and/or anticipated demand for walking or biking.

1. Where is it difficult to walk or bike to transit?

We used a walkshed analysis and sought input from jurisdictions to identify stations with deficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

TPB staff used an analysis of “walksheds” to identify locations where walking and biking to transit is relatively difficult. A walkshed is a catchment area in which the outer perimeter represents the distance that people can be expected to walk to a central destination.

The walkshed analysis for this project included the development of maps and associated data for each station area using GIS. To develop the walksheds, staff performed geospatial analysis using ArcGIS software utilizing the Network Analyst extension, specifically using the Service Area analysis option. Service areas define an area of network facilities (e.g., streets, trails, and other elements) that can be traversed in a prescribed time or distance. Staff developed a methodology for creating walksheds for each identified high-capacity transit station that would best reflect the opportunities and deficiencies around each station area.

Staff identified the walksheds for all the station areas selected for this analysis and calculated the percent of walkshed coverage within a half mile for each station area. A draft table containing this information was developed for use in later stages of the analysis.

During outreach to our members, TPB staff learned that our walkshed analysis did not always fully represent walkability today or what is expected in the near future. Therefore, adjustments were made in our final selections of TAFAs, based on requests from affected jurisdictions backed up with justifications for such changes.

2. Where is there significant potential demand for walking and biking?

We screened stations to identify locations with high employment/population density and sought confirmation from jurisdictions.

The TPB analysis also sought to identify places with significant numbers of people living or working close to transit. Staff identified the Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) associated with the stations and summarized the combined population and employment densities for each station for 2030. The presence of higher densities was assumed to represent a current or latent potential demand for walking or biking to transit.

Similar to the input we received regarding walksheds, we learned during outreach to our members that our estimations of density did not always depict the realities that are understood at the local level. Based on feedback provided by our members, adjustments were made in the final list of TAFAs.

3. Where are vulnerable populations concentrated?

We identified station areas that are in Equity Emphasis Areas.

The station areas selected for analysis were also screened to identify whether they are in Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs), which are small geographic areas that are home to relatively high concentrations of minority and low-income communities.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIST OF TAFAS BASED UPON REGIONAL ANALYSIS AND LOCAL INPUT

Staff used analysis and outreach to develop the draft list of Transit Access Focus Areas. The draft list was developed as follows:

1. Develop a composite score for each station area

Staff used its draft analysis to develop composite regional scores for each station area using the three factors described above. The factors were weighted as follows:

- 50% - Deficient ped/bike infrastructure (walkshed analysis)
- 35% - Demand for walking & biking (high population/employment density)
- 15% - Vulnerable populations (Equity Emphasis Areas)

2. Determine the number of TAFAs per jurisdiction

Before TAFAs could be identified for each jurisdiction, staff needed to determine the number of station areas that would be allocated to each jurisdiction.

Understanding that land in proximity to transit is a regional asset, staff sought to establish a system for allocating TAFAs that would fairly represent each jurisdiction's opportunity to promote walking and biking within their borders. To provide a basis for this allocation, staff calculated the total land area in the entire region that is within a half-mile of high-capacity transit and identified each jurisdiction's share of this land. With these calculations in mind, we established the following breakdowns for determining the number of TAFAs for each member jurisdiction:

- Staff analysis determined that our largest inner jurisdictions – DC, Fairfax, Montgomery, and Prince George's – each have between 14 and 20 percent of the land in our region within a half mile of high-capacity transit. To maintain balance among these large jurisdictions, we determined that we would allocate eight TAFAs to each of these jurisdictions.
- Two inner jurisdictions – Arlington and Alexandria – each have relatively large land areas in proximity to transit, but these areas are nonetheless significantly smaller than the four largest jurisdictions. These two jurisdictions were proportionately assigned a number of TAFAs that is commensurate with each jurisdiction's share of the region's transit accessible land within their borders – two TAFAs for Alexandria and three for Arlington.
- From the start, the project stipulated that every TPB member jurisdiction that has a high-capacity station area in its borders would have at least one TAFE on our list. (In some cases, this includes jurisdictions that may not actually have a station within their borders but nonetheless have significant land areas within a mile of the stations.) These jurisdictions include the cities of College Park, Falls Church, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Manassas, Manassas Park, Rockville, and Takoma Park.

3. Eliminate stations that are already walkable

Staff determined that areas that are already quite walkable did not need to be included on our list and should be taken off the table. Therefore, station areas with a walkshed coverage of more than 50% were not eligible for inclusion, for the most part.

4. Select TAFAs for each jurisdiction

After applying the criteria described above, staff used the composite regional scores for each station area to select the top scoring locations for inclusion on the draft TAFE list. Through a series of meetings and discussions with our member governments, this list was adjusted to reflect realities understood at the local level.

NEXT STEPS

TPB staff is looking forward to getting comments and hopefully receiving support for the Transit Within Reach project at the Technical Committee meeting on June 5. Based upon input received, we will revise materials for presentation to the TPB as an information item on June 17.

We anticipate further discussions and presentations during June and July. The list of TAFAs will be presented to the TPB for approval on July 22.

Please contact us with any follow-up questions or comments.

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- John Swanson, jswanson@mwkog.org

TRANSIT ACCESS FOCUS AREAS

	STATION AREA NAME	JURISDICTION	TYPE OF TRANSIT
1	Reed Ave	Alexandria/Arlington Co	BRT/Street Car
2	Eisenhower Avenue	Alexandria/Fairfax Co	Metrorail
3	Crystal City	Arlington Co	Multimodal
4	26th and Clark	Arlington Co	BRT/Street Car
5	South Glebe Rd	Arlington Co/Alexandria	BRT/Street Car
6	West Campus	College Park/Prince George's Co	Light Rail
7	Noma-Gallaudet	DC	Metrorail
8	Rhode Island Ave	DC	Metrorail
9	Fort Totten	DC	Metrorail
10	Anacostia	DC	Metrorail
11	Benning and 34th NE	DC	BRT/Street Car
12	Benning and Minnesota Ave	DC	BRT/Street Car
13	Deanwood	DC/Prince George's Co	Metrorail
14	Congress Heights	DC	Metrorail
15	Reston Town Center	Fairfax Co	Metrorail
16	Herndon	Fairfax Co	Metrorail
17	Greensboro Tyson Central Rt 7	Fairfax Co	Metrorail
18	Seven Corners Transit Center	Fairfax Co	Bus-Only Transit Center
19	Dunn Loring	Fairfax Co	Metrorail
20	Woodlawn	Fairfax Co	BRT/Street Car
21	Gum Springs	Fairfax Co	BRT/Street Car
22	Hybla Valley	Fairfax Co	BRT/Street Car
23	West Falls Church	Falls Church/Fairfax Co	Metrorail
24	Monocacy/I-270	Frederick Co	Commuter Rail
25	Frederick	Frederick, City of	Commuter Rail
26	Metropolitan Grove	Gaithersburg	Multimodal
27	Greenbelt	Greenbelt/College Park	Metrorail
28	Ashburn	Loudoun Co	Metrorail
29	Broad Run/Airport	City of Manassas/Prince William Co	Commuter Rail
30	Manassas Park	Manassas Park	Commuter Rail
31	Woodside	Montgomery Co	Light Rail
32	LSC Central	Montgomery Co	BRT/Street Car
33	Long Branch	Montgomery Co	Light Rail
34	Lyttonsville	Montgomery Co	Light Rail

35	Shady Grove	Montgomery Co	Multimodal
36	White Oak Transit Center BRT	Montgomery Co	BRT/Street Car
37	Stewart Lane BRT	Montgomery Co	BRT/Street Car
38	Germantown	Montgomery Co	Commuter Rail
39	Riggs Road	Prince George's Co	Light Rail
40	Southern Avenue	Prince George's Co/DC	Metrorail
41	Prince George's Plaza	Prince George's Co	Metrorail
42	West Hyattsville	Prince George's Co	Metrorail
43	New Carrollton	Prince George's Co	Multimodal
44	Suitland	Prince George's Co	Metrorail
45	Oxon Hill/National Harbor	Prince George's Co	Bus-Only Transit Center
46	Largo	Prince George's Co	Metrorail
47	Woodbridge	Prince William Co	Multimodal
48	Twinbrook	Rockville/Montgomery Co	Metrorail
49	Takoma/Langley Transit Center	Takoma Park/ Prince George's/ Montgomery	Light Rail