
**TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

October 1, 2021

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

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

2. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

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

ITEMS FOR THE BOARD AGENDA

3. STATUS REPORT ON THE 2021 ENHANCED MOBILITY GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Ritacco presented an overview of the Enhanced Mobility grant program, status of the selection process, and the timeline for TPB committee briefings and actions in the coming months. He began by presenting the guiding principles, policies, and planning document guiding the solicitation process. This review included information on the needs, strategies, and priority projects established in the Coordinated Plan and guides the selection of Enhanced Mobility projects. He described the solicitation for grant applications which ran from July 1 to September 1, 2021. TPB staff held five virtual pre-application conferences. The Selection Committee met in September and was chaired by AFA Chair Mr. Canek Aguirre. Twenty-three applications were reviewed by the Selection Committee. The total federal request was much greater than funding available: \$11.1 million in requests for the \$6.6 million available.

Mr. Ritacco said that the TPB Officers would be reviewing the funding recommendations and with their concurrence, the recommendations will be presented to the TPB for approval at the November meeting. The recommendations will be made public the day of the TPB mailout: November 10, 2021. The applications not recommended for funding will receive a letter with tips for improving their application for the next solicitation. The TPB solicits for projects every two years and the next solicitation is planned for Summer 2023.

Mr. Brown inquired about the federal rules regarding project eligibility in jurisdictions where its boundaries fall inside and outside of the Washington DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area boundary that is an FTA requirement of the program.

Mr. Ritacco responded by presenting the clarification received by FTA personnel stating that projects are eligible for the TPB's Enhanced Mobility program if they serve residents that are within the urbanized area boundary.

4. PBPP – DRAFT TRANSIT SAFETY TARGETS

Mr. Randall briefed the committee on the 2021 draft regional targets for the transit safety performance measures under the federal performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) rulemaking for public transportation providers and MPOs. to set targets for transit safety performance measures. He noted that this is the second time the TPB will be taking up these targets. In addition to a presentation slide deck, there was also a memorandum and a draft report in the meeting materials. He referred to his presentation and reviewed the federal rulemaking history and requirements. The four performance measures for which transit safety targets must be set are fatalities, injuries, safety events, and system

reliability. He then reviewed the applicability of the rule in detail: WMATA and PRTC are direct federal recipients and the Maryland local systems are sub-recipients through MTA, so they all set targets. However, the Northern Virginia local bus systems don't receive federal funds and the rule is not applicable to them; nor is it applicable to the commuter rail systems. He then reviewed the calculation that went into developing the regional targets, adding up numbers for the number targets but for the rate targets summing the nominator and denominator figures regionally first. The draft targets for the region across the six modes: heavy rail, streetcar rail, urban bus, commuter bus, paratransit/demand-response, and vanpool were then shown. He noted caveats to the draft figures, including that some were not yet formally approved by agencies.

Mr. Randall then showed the 2020 targets for comparison, followed by a slide of main points from 2020. A review of safety data as reported to the FTA's National Transit Database was conducted for transit systems in the region for 2020. The pandemic hugely impacted transit, both service and ridership. There were five fatalities but almost no serious injuries as opposed to the several hundred predicted. For 2021, a new mode, vanpools, has been added. Otherwise, agencies are setting tougher targets, both a reflection of anticipated lower than previous ridership and service, but also a reflection of a better understanding of safety trends and ability to meet targets. In closing, the board will be briefed on the draft targets at its October meeting with adoption scheduled for November; comments on the draft targets are requested by the end of October.

Mr. Brown asked if Loudoun commuter bus is included in these targets.

Mr. Randall clarified that they are not.

Mr. Erenrich asked if there were any way targets could be developed for all of the transit systems in the region, as the TPB is a regional body.

Mr. Randall responded that without any federal requirement for the transit systems for which the rulemaking is not applicable, it was unlikely those systems would set targets. He emphasized that actual safety data for all of the region's systems including those of Northern Virginia is included in the report.

5. TRANSIT SERVICE AND FARE EQUITY

Mr. Randall briefed the committee on the white paper prepared on transit equity in the region, looking specifically at local bus service coverage and frequency in relation to the travel needs of traditionally disadvantaged populations. The committee was previously briefed on the draft white paper at its May meeting. Since that time the consultants completed the final report and also prepared a webmap, the demonstration of which was the main intent of the day's briefing.

Mr. Randall spoke to a presentation and referenced a technical memo in the meeting documents. He opened by recapping that starting in March 2020 transit agencies across the region drastically cut service in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Over the past year, transit agencies have gradually been restoring service; in addition to the pandemic, 2020 also saw a renewed national focus on equity in transit. Accordingly, TPB contracted with ICF Consulting and Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning to produce a white paper to inform regional decision makers about equity-related factors to consider in restoring transit service and in planning for long term (post-pandemic) service expansion. The white paper analysis considers local bus transit stop locations, frequency of service, peak vs. off-peak, and span of service, as of March 15, 2021. These factors are compared to the locations of: COG's Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs), historically disadvantaged populations (e.g., people of color, low-income households, non-native English speakers), and essential workers. Through mapping, the analysis attempts to answer the question of whether the select population groups have good access to transit

compared to the general population and then access during peak periods to high-frequency service (at least every fifteen minutes). Eric showed a typical static map of persons of color by census map compared to bus stop access as an example. Generally, the analysis finds that EEA residents and disadvantaged populations do have better access to transit than the general population, but that access to high-frequency – at least every 15 minutes – is only available to 30% of the population. The key finding of the white paper is that “The low percentage of access to frequent service, even in the peak periods, remains a concern, particularly for quality of life and jobs access”

Mr. Randall concluded by going to the webmap tool, which also has a link to the white paper. The various layers and capabilities of the webmap were shown.

<https://fitp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=dd131b91ef5148fbadd4778015f19cc9>

Mr. Randall noted that this item, and the fare equity item that Antonio would take up next, would be going to the board in October. He hopes that the final product and tool will be helpful to transit planners across the region. He then introduced the next item, a fare equity review that was authored by his colleague.

Mr. Castañeda then briefed the committee on a memorandum that was prepared to consider fare equity in the region. The purpose was to assess transit fare relief efforts in the region and nationally, provide an overview of local bus fare collection and revenue as they relate to the COVID-19 pandemic, and outline lessons learned from fare free and means-tested programs historic and ongoing across the US. He noted that much work was active in the region on this topic, including a recent report by NVTC.

Mr. Castañeda reviewed the chief contents of the memorandum. Throughout 2020, most local bus services in the National Capital Region suspended fare collection in the interest of public health and safety for riders and operators. Over the last few months fare collection and service restoration have slowly been reintroduced as more residents become inoculated and ridership returns. During this period, a renewed interest and urgency for transit fare relief has emerged as transit ridership trends shed light on our essential workers and transit dependent populations, especially on bus transit.

Mr. Castañeda then provided some data on fares and revenues in the region, reporting that in 2019 the National Capital Region provided over 170 million trips to riders across 12 local bus service providers, collecting upwards of \$167 million in fare revenues. He noted that fare relief initiatives have existed in the NCR over the last 20 years, with agencies who have studied or implemented fare relief locally include: WMATA, Circulator, Ride On, Connector, CUE, and DASH. He said that a review of national programs finds that system-wide fare free programs are most often implemented in smaller agencies with low fare recovery ratios. Means-tested programs have been implemented in many large agencies where foregoing fare revenues would be too costly. Lessons learned included: ridership gains have been experienced across almost all pilots, with larger impacts on heavily utilized systems. Higher demand can affect travel times and service reliability. Usually the loss of fare revenues is the largest barrier to implementation, though it is important to assess the cost of fare collection and enforcement. Outcomes have been that fare relief can improve the safety and equity of riders and bus operators by eliminating fare disputes and fare enforcement which disproportionately impacts minority and low-income transit riders, and that fare relief can improve the quality of life and sustainability of local communities.

Mr. Groth noted that in Charles County they are intending to go fare free. However, that this may lead to crowding on the buses while still in a pandemic has led them to delay this for the immediate future.

Mr. Brown asked if the material presented been cross-checked with the traditional Title VI analysis that transit operators need to go through when modifying service at a route level, e.g. more robust, less robust or other, same data or different data? Eric responded that the service equity analysis was

developed and completed without any consideration of Title VI work done by the transit agencies; the focus is on demographic information and a one-time snapshot of service, not the types of analysis done when agencies are considering changing service. However, he hoped the tool would be useful for such analyses by local transit agencies.

Mr. Srikanth spoke to note that the impetus for the work and briefings was in response to the interests of the TPB Chair and other elected officials. This analysis is at a higher level and is more strategic work than that for the Title VI compliance work required of transit providers. The purpose is to consider equity needs at a regional level.

Mr. Erenrich reported that Ride On will keep the fare free holiday until January 2022. The county just released a Fare Equity Study and it recommend a \$1 fare. This will be reviewed by Council.

Mr. Phillips expressed appreciation for the work. He noted that WMATA has done a fair amount of peer research on fare-free service and other discount regimes, but that more information is always helpful.

6. MOVING TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIMATE PLAN STRATEGIES – VEHICLE ELCTRICIFICATION

Mr. King provided an update on electric vehicle planning in the region. First, he discussed COG's adopted 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan, including several zero emission vehicle strategies and implementation targets in the plan. The plan calls for expanding light, medium, and heavy fleets as well as building out the needed charging infrastructure. He also discussed several trends and developments as well as drivers of change and areas of interest. He discussed various COG efforts at the regional and local levels to support and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles. COG has two master contracts in place to support local planning efforts, and more than 11 COG members are involved in local electric vehicle planning initiatives, either completed or in progress. There is growing interest in deploying electric school and transit buses including WMATA and a number of local transit providers. In terms of next steps, COG will continue to support market development, and look for ways to support local initiatives on planning, procurement, and deployment. As part of the work, there may be an opportunity to handle certain regional tasks separately than individual jurisdiction-specific activities, COG is currently working on a scope of work with Frederick County and is exploring how certain planning components could be worked on collaboratively at the regional level.

Mr. Groth noted challenges and opportunities may be different in urban vs. more rural or suburban areas. For instance, larger fueling stations may be available in areas with more land space, where DC Fast Charge systems can be installed at fueling stations that offer other amenities and services, and that there may be an expanding case for businesses to offer such charging capabilities. In more urban areas, it may be important to look at what can be done to get charging into parking garages in commercial buildings. He said that development and zoning code regulations might be able to help with aspects of accelerating deployment of charging infrastructure.

Mr. Srikanth reiterated that to meet the aggressive 2030 greenhouse gas goals for the region, it is important for all stakeholders in all sectors to play a role. It will be critical to move vehicle fleet conversion, and the multiple stakeholders and areas of focus may include OEMs, energy suppliers, commercial and residential sector, permitting, DOTs, EVSE and fleets. He is interested in whether there may be support for developing a general planning resource document applicable to everyone, pooling resources, and driving home transportation investment opportunities to use funding to implement and help support building infrastructure and to help prepare for the transition. He would like to look more at seeing what is being done, looking at how DOTs are investing and funding, or implementing programs and services. It was suggested that staff look at innovative ways to offer charging such as through roadside assets such as parking meters or streetlights.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. VISUALIZE 2045 – PLAN DOCUMENT STATUS AND SCHEDULE

Ms. Cook reviewed with the Committee the content and organization of the Visualize 2045 document and its appendices. She described new content that would be included in the plan, such as data and narratives from the Voices of the Region public outreach. She also noted that the TPB staff would appreciate any photos that members of the region have to show recent transportation improvements in the plan.

Staff provided the opportunity for feedback on the document and the recent revisions.

Mr. Phillips suggested that the TPB staff present to the committee on the performance measures to be used in the plan's system's performance analysis.

8. RTS IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Ms. McCall provided background and context for the Regional Travel Survey (s) In-Depth Analysis. The RTS is a once-a-decade household travel survey for the National Capital Region. While the data was collected in advance of the pandemic, the RTS data and findings are still relevant and important as they provide a point of comparison with a post-pandemic "new normal."

Mr. Joh delivered presentations on the initial findings. He requested TPB Committee members send questions to evaluate using the results of the RTS. Staff set the questions to the side until post-survey processing, survey expansion, and the release of the public file was complete. Last year, staff reviewed and selected eleven questions to examine for this project. This is the first time that staff performed in-depth analysis on the results of the household travel survey.

Mr. Gao, Ms. Joh, and Ms. Kile described the question they examined and corresponding findings.

Mr. Gao reported on telework eligibility and proximity to high-capacity transit (HCT).

Mr. Joh described the dimensions and characteristics of peak and off-peak travel.

Ms. Kile described the use of personal vehicles for activities after commuting home from work on transit.

Ms. McCall noted that responses to the eleven questions have been posted to the RTS website. Additional resources on the RTS website include the RTS technical documentation, the Regional Transportation Data Clearinghouse (RTDC) RTS tabulations, and the RTS public files.

Mr. Brown said that he found the analysis to be fascinating. He wondered if the models of the future will have artificial intelligence built into them and use this kind of data to develop predictive information.

Ms. McCall suggested that perhaps a longer conversation could be held to discuss the evolving nature of models with the members of the Travel Forecasting and Emission Analysis team. She noted that the main purpose of the project was to respond to question from members.

Mr. Moran posted a comment that the RTS is a primary input to the model.

Mr. Phillips thanked the team for providing the analysis; he recognized some of the questions submitted by WMATA. He also noted that there might be utility in explaining the difference between the current model and the upcoming Activity-Based model (ABM) to show what new functionality it will bring. He is curious if this deeper analysis will be a typical approach with ABM or if it will require less effort from staff. Mr. Srikanth agrees and has discussed providing an update on work activities for the new model with Mr. Moran. The TPB is approximately halfway through its seven-year plan of generating the next model and providing general oversight on how the new model differs. The new model will have the ability to explore and answer some of the policy questions which the current model is not able to perform at the same level. This kind of deep dive into the household travel survey is invariably based on

some policy types of questions posed by our Board, elected officials, public, and planners.

Mr. Srikanth also noted that staff explored additional questions and will deliver additional presentations on this project in the future.

9. UPDATED TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Mr. Canan kicked off this item by providing updated information that staff has collected throughout the pandemic, including key multisectoral indicators on the impacts of COVID-19 in the National Capital Region, including findings of a recent analysis of regional travel occurring before and after Labor Day 2021. This included data on regional employment rates, traffic volumes, transit ridership, traffic incidents and crashes, and metrics on the volume of calls and applications placed with the Commuter Connections Program. All indicators showed that, following steep declines during the peak of the pandemic, the region continued to sustain notable recovery in all sectors through July 2021.

Mr. Meese provided more in-depth analysis of recent travel that occurred before and after Labor Day 2021, also noting substantial recovery and a return of higher observed peak travel during the period. While transit and traffic volumes continued to recover, Mr. Meese noted that workplace occupancy continues to be a significant driver of travel volumes and ridership, especially given federal and military guidelines to employees in the National Capital Region.

Several questions were raised following the briefings for discussion. One question asked if it could be concluded that the recovery in traffic volumes and the comparable slower recovery in transit ridership indicate that former transit riders are now driving.

Mr. Meese explained that while many former transit riders are likely to be driving, the issue is complex and there are other factors to consider. For example, unemployment has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels and the federal government has not yet ordered its civilian and military personnel back to full office occupancy.

Another member asked if the data indicated any correlation in increased volumes to schools opening back up. The monthly volume data presented only included observations through July; however, the pre- and post-Labor Day traffic analysis did examine this relationship and revealed no clear correlation.

In addition, a member asked if there was a correlation between lower transit ridership in corridors where peak highway traffic volumes have not returned to pre-COVID levels. The data did not include corridor-specific analysis, but the sub-regional variation in traffic volumes was noted. As part of this, a member observed that another factor in increased traffic volumes may be the higher availability of parking.

10. 2015 OZONE SIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Jane Posey informed the Tech Committee that the region will have to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) because it did not obtain the 2015 Ozone Standard by the required deadline at the end of the 2020 ozone season. The SIP will contain new Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEBs) which, once approved by EPA, will have to be used for all air quality conformity analyses. Ms. Posey emphasized the importance of including “safety margins” in the setting of the MVEBs and encouraged the committee members to participate in the MVEB development process. She shared the SIP schedule, including mobile inventory development in the Spring of 2022 and MVEB setting discussions in early Summer 2022.

There were no questions.

OTHER ITEMS

11. OTHER BUSINESS

COG hybrid/in person meeting status report

Staff shared information about COG preparing to begin holding hybrid meetings. COG is able to hold committee meetings as long as rules and regulations set by the District of Columbia are being followed. Staff estimate that hybrid meetings will be offered when staff return to the building in January 2022. It was noted that if the Board chairs would like to hold hybrid meetings prior to January it could be worked out.

COG-wide Printing Policy reminder (“going green”) – has been in place since 2012, the intent is printing as few copies as possible

Staff informed the Technical committee about the COG policy on meeting materials. Technical committee members wishing for printed materials must send a request to staff prior to the meeting.

Proposed rulemaking for CAFE standards

Staff informed the Technical committee that the TPB and COG staff have drafted a letter of support for the proposed rule developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to strengthen the existing CAFE standards for model year 2024-2026 passenger cars and light trucks. Following approval from the steering committee, DEP staff will coordinate with the MWAQC executive committee and CEEPC legislative committee for their approvals before comments are due October 26.

Optimizing land use around High Capacity Transit and elevating Equity Emphasis Areas – TPB Resolution R4-2022

Staff updated the Technical committee on the decision of Board members to take a position on the two resolutions that the COG board will be adopting on October 13. Both of the resolutions are tied to the TPB work products on High Capacity Transit Station Areas and Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs). Resolutions were developed that the TPB will endorse the new planning construct to build transit-oriented communities around the region and to endorse COG’s resolution to elevate and use the EEAs map and approach in all disciplines in planning and programming decisions.

Resiliency Study Update

Staff updated the Technical committee on the Resiliency Study progress and thanked members for their review and input of the draft whitepaper and memo. Staff estimate the finalization of the whitepaper and memo in late October or early November.

Visualize 2045 update: photo request

Staff asked the Technical committee to contribute photos for the plan update. Photo submissions can be sent to Sarah Bond (sbond@mwkog.org).

Regional Roadway Safety Program – application period open until October 12

Staff reminded the Technical committee of the October 12 application deadline for the current round of the FY 2022 Regional Roadway Safety Program.

12. ADJOURN

No other business was brought before the committee.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Mark Rawlings – DC DOT Kristin Calkins – DCOP Jason Groth – Charles County Mark Mishler – Frederick County David Edmondson – City of Frederick Eric Graye – M-NCPPC / Montgomery Kari Snyder - MDOT Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Jennifer Slesinger - Alexandria Dan Malouff – Arlington County Malcolm Watson – Fairfax County Robert Brown – Loudoun County	Chloe Delhomme – City of Manassas Sree Nampoothiri – NVTA Dan Goldfarb – NVTC Meagan Landis – Prince William County Norman Whitaker - VDOT Maria Sinner – VDOT Regina Moore – VDOT Ciara Williams – VDRPT Katherine Youngbluth - VDRPT Nick Ruiz - VRE Mark Phillips – WMATA Laurel Hammig - NPS
--	---

OTHERS / MWCOG STAFF PRESENT

Andrew Austin Andrew Meese Antonio Castañeda Bill Bacon Bryan Hayes Charlene Howard Dusan Vuksan Eric Randall Erin Morrow Jane Posey Jeff King Jinchul Park John Swanson Jon Schermann Kanti Srikanth	Ken Joh Leo Pineda Lyn Erickson Mark Moran Martha Kile Nazneen Ferdous Nicole McCall Pat Warren Paul DesJardin Sarah Bond Sergio Ritacco Stacy Cook Tim Canan Yu Gao
---	---