
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

September 16, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Kelly Russell, TPB Chair – City of Frederick
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Lezlie Rupert – DDOT
Kristin Calkins - DC Office of Planning
Phil Mendelson – DC City Council
Charles Allen – DC City Council
Samuel Stephens – DC City Council
Jeffrey Hirsch – Maryland DOT
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT
Adrian Boafo - Bowie
Jason Groth – Charles County
Patrick Wojahn – College Park
Denise Mitchell – College Park
David Edmonston – City of Frederick
Dennis Enslinger – Gaithersburg
Neil Harris - Gaithersburg
Emmet V. Jordon – Greenbelt
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Evan Glass – Montgomery County
Terry Bellamy – Prince George’s County Executive Office
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive Office
Deni Taveras – Prince George’s County
Bridget Donnell Newton – Rockville
Kacy Kostiuik – Takoma Park
Mark Korman – Maryland House of Delegates
Carol Krimm – Maryland House of Delegates
Mark Sinner – Virginia DOT
Norman Whitaker – Virginia DOT
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria
Christian Dorsey – Arlington County
Walter Acorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Kristin Umstattd – Loudoun County
Pamela J. Sebesky – Manassas
Jeannette Rishell – Manassas Park
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Allison Davis – WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA DC
Julia Koster – NCPC
Tammy Stidham – NPS

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Chuck Bean
Lyn Erickson
Mark Moran
Nick Ramfos
Tim Canan
Andrew Meese
Andrew Austin
Stacy Cook
Bryan Hayes
Sergio Rittaco
John Swanson
Dusan Vuksan
Eric Randall
Deborah Etheridge
Abigail Zenner
Mark Phillips – WMATA
Nancy Abeles – CAC Chair
Kyle Nembhard - MTA

1. VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Chair Russell called the meeting to order. She said the meeting would use the same procedures for questions, comments, and voting as it used at previous online meetings. She said the first item was a roll call of members followed by public comment.

Ms. Erickson conducted a roll call. Members that were present are listed on the first page of this document.

Chair Russell asked if any comments were received from the public.

Ms. Erickson said that one comment was received from Greenbelt resident Danielle Celdran. The commenter said they support the no-build option for maglev because they want transit that serves local communities and not an exclusive train that passes those communities by.

2. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 22, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Sebesky made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 2020 TPB meeting.

Ms. Rishell seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Nembhard said that the Technical Committee met on September 4. He reviewed the meeting summary for the September Technical Committee meeting. He said that the committee was briefed on items going to the TPB this month including items on the Participation Plan update, draft transit safety targets, and the telework survey results. More detail can be found in the committee report.

Ms. Kostiuk asked if the board could be briefed on the impacts of COVID-19 in the region.

Mr. Srikanth said that staff are planning on bringing a series of briefings to the board on this topic. He said that Item 11 on today's agenda focuses on the impact on telework during the pandemic. He said staff are working to compile additional information.

4. CAC REPORT

Ms. Abeles said that the Citizens Advisory Committee met on September 10. She said that the committee was briefed on the Participation Plan update and Visualize 2045. The committee was also briefed on the Equity Resolution approved by the TPB in July. She said the committee encouraged staff to continue thinking about how to implement the resolution to ensure that all groups have a voice at the TPB. More detail can be found in the committee report.

Ms. Kostiuk announced that long-time AFA member, Charlie Crawford died. She described his career accomplishments and said he is survived by his wife and seeing-eye dog. She said he was a tireless advocate and a positive force for change.

Mr. Weissburg said that Mr. Crawford was a stellar pillar of his community and one of the most decent and humble people he knew.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Srikanth highlighted two items. The first item, beginning on page 31, was a copy of the slides that Chair Russell used in her remarks to the Maryland House of Delegates Transportation and the Environment Subcommittee at a meeting on August 13, 2020. The committee was exploring the current experience with teleworking, alternate work schedules, and what teleworking means as a strategy to address congestion during the commute periods in Maryland moving forward. The second item that Mr. Srikanth highlighted, which was on page 49, was a save-the-date notification for the TPB's work session on climate change planning that will held prior to the October board meeting.

Mr. Srikanth noted that an item had been added since the mailout, which was a memo from Andrew Meese regarding COG/TPB staff work with the Greater Washington Partnership on facilitating information between the region's employers and transit operators. He said that COG/TPB staff is collecting information on the planned transit services changes and the Greater Washington Partnership is collecting information from employers about their plans to bring employees back to work sites. He noted that the results from an inaugural survey of employers in the region had been released and made available on a public website noted in the memo.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Russell said that she began the year setting three focus areas for 2020: increasing road user safety, improving access to transit and active transportation, and climate change. She said that the unexpected public health emergency and the social awakening and reckoning of racial inequities will influence everything the board does moving forward. She acknowledged the active participation of the board members and recognized the work of the CAC, AFA, and Technical committees for staying focused and turning challenges into opportunities. She said that in July the board achieved several milestones by approving the safety resolution reaffirming the board's commitment to safety, the Transit Access Focus Areas, and the National Capital Trails Network. She said that the board will have a 90-minute work session in October to learn more about and discuss climate change. Finally, she said that the TPB and COG have partnered to host a series of five virtual town halls for local government officials. She

said that this is the direct outcome of the equity statement adopted in July. She said that in order for the TPB to truly advance equity, it is important to have a common understanding of the nature of the challenge and the strategies to build a more resilient and more equitable community,

ACTION ITEMS

7. AMEND THE FY 2021-2024 TIP TO UPDATE PROJECTS AND FUNDING IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SECTION OF THE TIP, AS REQUESTED BY DDOT

Ms. Rupert briefed the board on the request to amend the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to update projects and funding in the District of Columbia section of the TIP. DDOT requested an amendment to the FY 2021-2024 TIP to update the listing of projects, the project details and funding information for all four fiscal years of the TIP. The proposed amendment reduced funding in the four-year program by approximately \$200 million, from \$1.87 to 1.67 billion. She referred to the printed materials for reference. The amendment had been out for a 30-day public comment period with no comments received.

Ms. Rupert moved to adopt the amendment.

Mr. Allen moved to second.

The TPB approved Resolution R6-2021, the amendment to the FY 2021-2024 TIP.

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. PARTICIPATION PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Hayes briefed the board on the update to the TPB Participation Plan, which is currently under development. The update include expansion of the TPB's participation policy to add an equity lens, a new public guide, and a guide to help staff. He said the draft Participation Plan update is out for public comment until October 9.

Ms. Taveras asked about translation services and ensuring that materials are accessible in a variety of languages.

Mr. Hayes answered that the Participation Plan is separate from COG's Language Access Plan but that there are opportunities to update the Language Access Plan in the future.

Mr. Srikanth added that the TPB periodically conducts an analysis of the most common languages spoken in the region and that that analysis is used to inform the Language Access Plan.

9. PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING – TRANSIT SAFETY DRAFT TARGETS

Mr. Randall, referring to the presentation and memo, presented on Transit Safety Targets that are a part of the federally required Performance Based Planning and Programming. He explained that this is the first time the TPB will be setting regional targets regarding safety on transit in the region. One goal of this target-setting process is that it will lead to a greater focus on and understanding of the factors that affect safety on transit. As part of federal transportation regulations, the TPB as an MPO is required to establish transit safety targets for all applicable providers of public transportation in the region. The effort requires that the TPB establish new relationships to collect and report transit safety information between the TPB and the region's transit providers. He explained that the TPB must include all transit

systems in the region that receive FTA funds. These include those run by WMATA, DDOT, and local buses in suburban Maryland. Local systems in northern Virginia are not included since the federal rulemaking does not apply to them. TPB staff have worked with the transit systems to collect and compile their system targets to create the preliminary regional targets. Through October, TPB staff will continue to work with the systems as they finalize their targets, and the final set of regional targets will go to the TPB for board approval in November. He explained that the measures include collisions, derailments, fires, or evacuation, and a system reliability measure. This is very similar to the highway safety measures that the board has adopted in the past. Fatalities and serious injuries are also on the highway safety side. For transit, measures have been added that look at safety events and the system reliability performance.

Ms. Kostiuk asked for clarification about how the data is collected for injuries and fatalities on transit. She asked if a person were injured or killed while disembarking from a bus for example, would they be included in this data as a transit safety incident or would it be classified as a roadway incident.

Mr. Randall answered that when it comes to classifying data like that, it depends on how it is reported at the time of the incident. If the bus driver struck a pedestrian, that usually gets reported as a transit safety incident, but it depends on the reporting and data collection at the scene.

Ms. Kostiuk also noted the significant difference between the targets for fatalities and serious injuries for transit versus targets for personal vehicles and vehicles overall, with the fatalities in the hundreds and the serious injuries in the thousands. She said it was meaningful in terms of providing a different view of how safety can be improved through mass transit. She also asked if there was any consideration in terms of actual number of people involved or if this is based on vehicle miles traveled or what exactly vehicle "revenue miles" means.

Mr. Randall explained that there were different proposals to track this data. FTA settled on this vehicle revenue miles, in response to many comments that looking at utilization by passengers of transit services or other numbers were too complex and did not account for unique experiences or unique circumstances for each transit agency. He explained that more analysis could be done and some of the leading transit agencies do that sort of analysis. But otherwise, the greater point is that riding public transportation is generally safer than driving in an automobile. He also noted that as with other performance areas, the TPB hopes to do future work as this gets implemented by state DOTs, by MPOs, and by providers of public transportation.

10. VISUALIZE 2045: IMPLEMENTATION AND 2022 PLAN UPDATE

Referring to the material that was posted in advance of the meeting, Ms. Cook briefed the board on the development of the TPB's quadrennial long-range plan, Visualize 2045. She began by speaking about site visits conducted last year in which TPB staff met with the staff of TPB member jurisdictions to promote and discuss implementation of the aspirational initiatives in Visualize 2045. She described some of the findings from those site visits. She also spoke about planning activities that will be undertaken for the plan update, including public opinion research activities that are currently underway. She concluded with a timeline depicting the entire planning schedule, which will culminate with anticipated board approval of the plan in June 2022 and federal approval in the fall of that year.

Chair Russell asked how jurisdictions were selected for the public opinion survey that Ms. Cook described.

Ms. Cook said that all the TPB's jurisdictions have been included in the survey. She said that mailing addresses have been randomly selected for participation. The numbers in the survey sample for each jurisdiction were proportional to each jurisdiction's size. She said that the survey results would be

available at the level of 10 subregional areas – most of which are largely consistent with county borders. These subregional areas include: DC, Charles County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County. In the presentation of results, the responses from the municipalities and cities that geographically lie within these 10 subregional areas would be included in the larger geographic areas. She explained that it would have been cost-prohibitive to conduct a survey with results that would have been statistically significant at the city or municipality level.

Mr. Aguirre asked how people with limited or no English proficiency would be included in the public opinion research.

Ms. Cook said the survey is being conducted in English and Spanish. She said staff is also planning to conduct a series of focus groups. Staff is now determining how speakers of other languages might be included in this qualitative research.

Mr. Aguirre emphasized that communities of color have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that these communities are frequently reliant on public transportation. Therefore, he asked that special attention be given to these communities in the planning and design of the focus groups.

Mr. Snyder observed that transportation projects typically originate at the local and state levels, and by the time they get to the TPB, it is usually too late to change them. He asked how states and localities will be encouraged to identify projects that are supportive of TPB policies and metrics.

Mr. Srikanth said he appreciated the question. He said that the reality underlying Mr. Snyder’s comment was the primary reason that the TPB requested the assistance of board members last year in setting up the site visits that Ms. Cook described. He described the letters that board members were asked to send to the transportation directors and to the planning department directors within each jurisdiction. As a result of those letters, he said, more than 30 meetings were held with staff who are responsible for development and advancing projects. He noted that during these meetings staff discussed the TPB’s policy priorities, aspirational initiatives and sought ways in which TPB staff can help jurisdiction staffs with their project selection process. He said these kinds of discussions, along with other types of follow-up, will be essential to making sure the TPB’s policies are integrated into the local and state decision-making well in advance of the submission of projects for the TPB’s long-range plan. He said he welcomed additional suggestions for ways to forge a cooperative process for advancing regional priorities.

11. REGIONAL EMPLOYER TELEWORK SURVEY RESULTS

Mr. Ramfos presented information from a recent survey that the Commuter Connections Program conducted of employers on telework. He said the survey is conducted every three years and the primary purpose is to define the portion of teleworking that is influenced by the assistance provided by the Commuter Connection’s Employer Outreach Program. During FY 2020, the survey was expanded to include some additional questions on the coronavirus’s influence on telework at employment sites.

Mr. Ramfos provided detail about the survey methodology and results, including five slides of key highlights.

He said that during the pandemic, the survey found that the average share of employees who teleworked grew from 36% to 82% at sites with telework already in place. Nearly all (97%) respondents said at least some employees were teleworking since the start of the pandemic. More than half (55%) said all employees teleworked all of their workdays. He said that 92% of respondents said their organizations anticipated continuing telework after the Stay-at-Home restrictions were lifted and

employees could return to their usual work locations. Two in ten (20%) said they would most likely continue telework at the same level as during the pandemic.

Ms. Kostiuk observed that the response rate for DC employers was much lower than for Virginia and Maryland.

Mr. Ramfos said that was correct.

Mr. Snyder asked if the survey received any information about transit use. He also asked if the survey received information about whether employers would continue teleworking at the levels seen during the pandemic.

Mr. Ramfos said the survey did not ask about transit use. Regarding Mr. Snyder's second question, he said that about 20% of respondents said they would continue at current teleworking levels, while others said that future operations would combine more telework with going back to the office. Only 8% said they would not continue to offer teleworking as an option.

Mr. Srikanth called attention to Slide 12 in Mr. Ramfos' presentation, which showed the following: 20% of respondents expect to continue telework at pandemic levels; 37% expect to continue telework with more employees/hours than pre-pandemic levels; 12% expect to continue telework at pre-pandemic levels; 23% expect to continue telework with fewer employees/hours, than pre-pandemic levels; 8% said they are not likely to continue telework. Regarding Mr. Snyder's first question, Mr. Srikanth said the Greater Washington Partnership's survey of their employers found there are continuing concerns among employees about using transit.

Mr. Brown noted that Mr. Ramfos said the survey sample was small and it could not be considered statistically significant. He asked if the TPB had plans to conduct a survey on this topic with a larger sample.

Mr. Ramfos said that Commuter Connections does not have plans to re-survey on this particular topic, although they will be conducting other surveys that will add to the base of knowledge on telework.

Mr. Brown asked for more information on how significant the survey should be considered to be.

Mr. Ramfos reiterated that the response rate was low, so a confidence level was not calculated. He said the results should be considered to be comparable to the qualitative results that might be obtained through focus groups. He said that many employers were simply not reachable for the survey because many businesses were completely closed down or methods of communication were so constrained because of the pandemic.

Mr. Srikanth added that Ms. Cook, under the previous item, mentioned that the TPB will be conducting an opinion survey this fall that will be statistically significant. That survey will have some questions about the pandemic and the use of alternate modes of travel.

OTHER ITEMS

12. ADJOURN

Chair Russell reminded the board that Car Free Day would be September 22.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 PM.