
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

May 15, 2024

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *ONLINE*

Christina Henderson – DC Council, TPB Chair
Charles Allen – DC Council
Matt Frumin – DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Leigh Miles – DC Council
Sakina Khan – DC Office of Planning
Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning
Jason Groth – Charles County
Stuart Adams – College Park
Jessica Fitzwater – Frederick County
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
David Edmondson – City of Frederick
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County
Emad Elshafei – Rockville
Nancy King – Maryland Senate
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Tom Ross – City of Fairfax
Mike Turner – Loudoun County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Deshundra Jefferson – Prince William County
Amir Shahpar – VDOT
David Reid – Virginia House
Mark Phillips – WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA
Daniel Koenig – FTA
Michael Weil – NCP
Laurel Hammig – NPS

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *IN-PERSON*

Amanda Stout – DDOT
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Reuben Collins – Charles County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Kristen Weaver – Greenbelt
Haley Peckett – Montgomery County
Corey Pitts – Montgomery County
Eric Olson – Prince George’s County
Oluseyi Olugbenle – Prince George’s County
Monique Ashton – Rockville

Shana Fulcher – Takoma Park
Joseph McAndrew – MDOT
Drew Morrison – MDOT
Marc Korman – Maryland House
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Dave Snyder – Falls Church
Matthew Letourneau – Loudoun County
Rob Donaldson – Loudoun County
Meagan Landis – Prince William County
Bill Cuttler – VDOT
Jennifer Boysko – Virginia Senate
Allison Davis – WMATA

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Andrew Meese
Mark Moran
Tim Canan
Dan Sheehan
Leo Pineda
Sergio Ritacco
Rachel Beyerle
Deborah Etheridge
Kim Sutton
Jamie Bufkin
Cristina Finch
Andrew Austin
Amanda Lau
Jane Posey
Dusan Vuksan
Laura Bachle
Lindsey Martin
Kenneth Derryberry
Bill Bacon
Wanda Owens
Olga Perez
Michael Farrell
Pierre Gaunaurd
Feng Xie
Greg Goodwin
Amy Garbarini – Technical Committee Chair, DRPT
Ra Amin – CAC Chair
Hana Fouladi – DC Council
Madeline Hairfield – DDOT
Alex Freedman - DCOP

Kari Snyder – MDOT
Will Pines – MDOT
Sam Ray - MDOT
Regina Moore – VDOT
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Gary Erenrich – MCDOT
Evandro Santos – Prince William County
Glen Warren - MAAA
Bill Pugh – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Jason Stanford – Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
Janet Gallant – DontWiden270.org
Barbara Coufal – Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
Gary Hodge – Regional Policy Advisors
Theo Stamatis – Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce
Josh Veverka – Northern Virginia Realtors
Monica Backmon – Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Richard Parsons – SMTA
Stephen Kenny – Montgomery County Council
Zach Israel – TPB CAC member
Jim Woods – City of Rockville
Daniel Flores – Board of Trade
Bill Orleans – public
Angel Deem
Hannah Pajewski
Mike Garcia
Monica Bhati
Michael Guarino

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

Chair Cristina Henderson briefly reviewed the process she would use for facilitating the hybrid meeting.

Lyn Erickson conducted a roll call. Attendance for the meeting can be found on the first pages of the minutes. She confirmed there was a quorum.

Chair Henderson noted there were a number of public speakers and requested members of the public making comments limit their remarks to one minute each.

Lyn Erickson proceeded to call on each one of the public speakers.

Bill Pugh, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, said that the coalition does not think that the Visualize 2050 process complies with the board resolution from a few years ago to consider alternative scenarios to do zero-based budgeting and to see how this meets the region's climate goals. He said that the intention three years ago was to craft an alternative scenario that could help achieve the region's goals for equity and climate and safety, and this process did not do that. He stated that the zero-based budgeting exempted four out of five projects, and there are projects that are not built until 2040 and 2050 that are considered exempt. He asked the TPB to look at two projects and to remove them: the 495 Southside project and the lower 270 express lanes. He said these are not consistent with the region's goals and does not think that they are ready to go into the plan and should be considered as studies.

Janet Gallant, coordinator of DontWiden270.org, said the Maryland public and officials on the TPB have not been fully informed by Maryland DOT about certain projects. She said that regarding the Southside toll lanes, MDOT has not explained why, on the one hand, MDOT is withdrawing its own study of I-495 toll lanes from east of I-270 to the Wilson Bridge while, on the other hand, supporting the Virginia study to build toll lanes within that same portion of the Maryland Beltway. She stated that regarding the scope of MDOT's I-495/I-270 process, the TPB input table appears to indicate that MDOT will now begin the project, not from the George Washington Parkway north, but from the Virginia border north. She said this is not consistent with what MDOT has been telling the public for years or what is in the Record of Decision or what appears to be the project scope in MDOT's current federal grant application. She said MDOT has still not given the Maryland public or the TPB a compelling functional reason for the lower I-270 project and that congestion on lower I-270 has been mitigated by MDOT's own innovative efforts. She said that adding toll lanes to an already well-functioning highway will cause major harm at great cost.

Josh Veverka, Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, offered his strong support for the full package of transportation projects submitted by Virginia, Maryland, and DC for Visualize 2050. He said that the organization represents 13,000 members across the entire region, not just in Northern Virginia and that the NVAR does 15,000 transactions representing over \$16 billion in sales each year. He said that every time they talk to buyers, and the businesses moving to the region, congestion and transportation is the primary concern. He said we need everything in our toolkit when talking about transportation. He stated that with a million new residents over the next 25 years, people are going to live everywhere, and they need to be able to move across all of these jurisdictions. He said the region cannot afford to eliminate vital transportation projects from this plan that will reduce congestion and help people's lives.

Barbara Coufal, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion, said that Virginia has a bottleneck where toll lanes end in Springfield, and Virginia is attempting to solve the bottleneck by moving the bottleneck to Oxon Hill. She said the Southside lanes and ramps would also block Metrorail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. She stated that an extension of the Blue Line would provide service to the entire region. She said VDOT's claims that the Southside lanes would not preclude Metrorail are not credible, and Virginia's P3 contracts are 75-year agreements. She stated that a shorter contract would be very expensive, and Virginia could easily avoid the expense by simply using its veto power to block the Blue Line extension. She concluded by urging the removal of the Southside lanes and the I-270 toll lanes.

Theofilos Stamatis, Loudoun Chamber of Commerce, expressed support for the Visualize 2050 project list. He said the projects represent a staunch commitment to expanding the capacity of the multimodal transportation network that supports the growing housing and economic development needs of the community. He said every project within the package will work to improve transportation network across the region and will fundamentally support prosperity, quality of life, and the capacity to create jobs and to accommodate the growth that communities have experienced.

Gary Hodge, Regional Policy Advisors, said that for more than 35 years, Maryland leaders have been working together on the goal of bringing high-capacity, fixed-route, rapid transit down the U.S. 301/Maryland 5 corridor from Branch Avenue to Waldorf and White Plains in Charles County. He stated that the officials of Charles and Prince George's County have asserted this priority for decades in their priority letters to the state. He said five major studies have been completed by the state in the last 25 years, confirming feasibility, high ridership, economic impact, and urgent need. He said landmark state legislation has been enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021, mandating prompt action for MDOT to complete the design, engineering, and NEPA process, and to secure a Record of Decision for the project. He noted Congress has approved two \$5 million earmarks and \$20 million is in the current State CTP. He said after decades of advocacy, planning studies, and major new state and federal policy and funding commitments, it is time for the TPB to acknowledge the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project as a state regional transit priority that will be completed within the 26-year scope of Visualize 2050 by including it in the long-range transportation plan.

Jason Stanford, Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, spoke on behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Coalition, to share strong support for the projects submitted by our region's transportation experts for the air quality conformity analysis. He urged support of the resolutions as introduced.

Richard Parsons, representing the Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance, expressed support of the full list of projects for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis, including the American Legion Bridge I-270 project and the I-495 Southside Beltway study. He strongly urged the board not to remove or change any of these items on the list because it would not be in keeping with TPB's mission to advance regional mobility, expand transit and carpooling options, and increase access to jobs throughout the region. He said the region needs a plan that relieves congestion and improves access to jobs, even for areas outside the urban core. He said, given our fiscal restraints, a plan that includes projects that can create their own new revenue streams because express lane projects do tend to pay for themselves over time. He stated that a regional plan that expands only transit does none of these things and is impossible for us to afford. He commented that regarding the I-270 program, he said it has taken 30 years to shepherd this project through various stops and starts of the environmental review process, one of the region's worst chokepoints, and there is now an approved Record of Decision. He said that any changes the TPB makes at this point in the process to the portion of the project that already has federal approval and is ready to go to construction runs the risk of engendering new lawsuits that could derail the project. He concluded asking for support of the project list as submitted.

Lyn Erickson said that between noon on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, and noon Tuesday, May 14, the TPB received six letters (including one resubmitted letter from the March comment period) and 125 comments submitted via email. She briefly summarized the comments.

- The Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) submitted supplemental written comments to those the SELC submitted to the Board on April 16, 2024, and related oral remarks delivered at the Board meeting on April 17, 2024. SELC urges the TPB to take all steps necessary to set the region on a path to achieve the climate goals adopted by COG, urges the TPB ensure that the cumulative GHG and VMT impacts of the Visualize 2050 Transportation Plan put the region on track to meeting its goals. SELC offered four recommendations to revise the conformity analysis. The letter also contains specific recommendations on several projects.
- Tad Aburn focused on two issues in the Envision 2050 air quality conformity analysis he declares are not well addressed: the Plan's failure to address high-risk air pollution hotspots in EJ communities of color created by transportation plans and programs; and, the analysis ignores climate change. He urged the TPB to review public comments expected to be received during the May 22 MWAQC meeting and the May 20 recommendations from ACPAC.
- Ashley Hutson, on behalf of the Heavy Construction Contractors Association, resubmitted comments from the Northern Virginia Transportation Coalition (NVTC). They share their strong support of the transportation projects submitted by Virginia for the Visualize 2050 Air Quality Conformity Analysis. They state the projects show a strong commitment to expanding capacity of a multimodal transportation network, including key regional upgrades such as the new Long Bridge. They urge leaders in DC and Maryland to follow Virginia's example by investing in infrastructure that expands capacity of the transportation network, such as Maryland's planned upgrades to the American Legion Bridge and I-270.
- The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (MTMBA) expresses their concern about comments made during the April 15 TPB meeting seeking to remove highway and bridge improvements from the agency-recommended list of projects for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis. They urge the TPB to reject such requests, stating that the highway network is aging and severely congested, with key bottlenecks such as the American Legion Bridge. The projects are needed to provide congestion relief and improve access to economic

development locations like National Harbor. The MTBMA supports transit projects and acknowledges that transit alone will not address all transportation needs, including movement of goods and services. Well-designed multi-modal express or HOT lane projects create new revenue streams, provide new opportunities for regional bus rapid transit service, and a portion of their future revenues can be dedicated to other transit services. They advocate a wholistic, multi-modal approach that meets all transportation needs in a fiscally responsible manner.

- Raymond Mondor wrote that the idea of building toll lanes on I-495 in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties is bad and premised on the intention to continually increase the population density of the surrounding locations. People moved to the suburbs because they want to live in suburbia, but these actions will lead to sprawl.
- The Arlington Chamber of Commerce wrote to express their support for all the submitted projects included on the project list. The submitted projects encompass a wide range of important transportation improvements, across all modes. They state that a multifaceted approach to transportation improvements is critical for the long-term economic success of our metropolitan region.
- The Committee for Dulles commented that key transportation initiatives such as the American Legion Bridge/270 and Southside Express Lane projects are essential to sustain the economic advantage an international airport brings to the region. Supporting these essential projects leverage Dulles International Airport and benefit the entire DC Metro area.
- The Coalition for Smarter Growth Email Campaign generated 121 emails from Wednesday afternoon, April 17, until noon Tuesday, May 14, from community members urging the TPB Board to reject the entire draft project list for Visualize 2050 if no changes are made. Four of the emails contained the same content as the campaign last month but were received after the cut-off date for the April meeting. Of the remaining 117 email forms received, 15 emails contained some variation in content. There were six instances of an individual submitting the exact email more than once. Writers urged the TPB to reject the entire draft project list and ask TPB staff to prepare a new plan with a smart growth alternative scenario that will help the region meet its urgent climate and equity goals if no changes are made to the list of projects. Writers noted that the region's local elected official representatives on the TPB voted for resolutions to fight climate change, promote equity, improve street safety, foster more walkable and transit-oriented communities, and to do a major overhaul of the regional transportation plan to support these goals. They noted public comments in March and in prior outreach have been overwhelmingly in favor of these goals and opposed to highway expansion, which they state are consistent with TPB's Voices of the Region survey, showing 84% of the region's residents want elected officials to consider climate change when planning transportation. They comment that the draft plan of projects that will be voted on this month by the TPB Board would fail to address these goals. Emails specifically referenced removal of several highway and arterial expansion projects in favor of prioritizing investments that support walkable, transit-friendly and inclusive communities. The emails conclude with the statement that the Visualize 2050 plan will be the last that can make a difference in helping the region meet its 2030 climate change goals, appreciating the changes that some jurisdictions have made.

Several speakers from the May 15 meeting included written comments. Lyn Erikson said that remarks were submitted from Richard Parsons, Gary Hodge, and the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 17, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Henderson moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Walkinshaw and was approved with one abstention, Virginia Senator Jennifer Boysko.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Lyn Erickson, reporting on behalf of Technical Committee Chair Amy Garbarini, said the TPB Technical Committee went over the Regional Roadway Safety Program project approvals, and TPB Item 8, the Visualize 2050 scope of work and air quality conformity analysis items. She said there were also items that were presented for information and consideration, including implementation considerations for on-road transportation greenhouse gas reduction strategies updates, a presentation on the TPB resources and applications page (TRAP), and a presentation on the Strategic highway Network. .

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT & ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Ra Amin, CAC Chair, provided highlights of the CAC meeting including discussion about the DMVMoves initiative and public outreach for the Visualize 2050 air quality conformity analysis. He said the CAC is pleased and excited to participate in the DMVMoves initiative as part of the Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG). He said that the CAC resolved that Ra Amin will serve as the representative from the CAC with vice chairs: Ashley Hutson, Virginia; Richard Wallace, Maryland, also assisting as alternates. He said CAC members had a number of questions, including concerns about how the greater community may get involved and how consensus will be reached with such a diverse set of interests. He said the CAC is committed to participate actively in this effort. He said they also discussed the public outreach effort for Visualize 2050. He stated that CAC members are interested in learning more about how they might evaluate and improve this public comment process in the future.

Vice-Chair James Walkinshaw delivered the Access for All Advisory Committee report, noting the summary did a good job of describing the meeting. He said it was the first meeting of the AFA that had an in-person component since COVID. He encouraged board members to review the meeting summary.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Kanti Srikanth said that in the interest of time, he would not go over details in the report. He provided an announcement regarding Item 8. He stated that there were some additional documents that were posted to the meeting webpage and hard copies of those letters have been distributed to the members who were present. He stated that those letters are also on the meeting materials page and within the documents are a letter from Fairfax County, a letter from the City of Rockville, a letter from Maryland Department of Transportation, and a letter from Prince George's County. He said that all letters pertain to projects that are under consideration today for approval and inclusion of air quality conformity analysis as part of Item 8.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

TPB Chair Christina Henderson announced that the TPB relaunched one of its flagship public outreach activities, the Community Leadership Institute. She said that twenty community leaders from across the region— from Charles County to Frederick to Manassas and jurisdictions in between—came together. She stated that over three evenings, the cohort learned about transportation planning and decision-making through interactive activities interspersed with informational presentations, including using an emissions calculator to decide which transportation strategies to use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Chair Henderson recognized CLI participants who received certificates for their completion of the program.

Chair Henderson commented that the board will take action on the Visualize 2050 inputs after much discussion and listening sessions. She stated that “now is the time to act” and every effort should be made to make the region even better than before. She said that the board has been working on updating the current Visualize 2045 plan for nearly a year and a half and will have the opportunity on May 15 to

share thoughts and state their positions before voting on the Visualize 2050 project list for air quality conformity analysis.

7. REGIONAL ROADWAY SAFETY PROGRAM PROJECT APPROVALS

Janie Nham, presented an overview of projects recommended for funding under the FY 2025 Regional Roadway Safety Program. She said that the program has funded 28 projects since it was established in 2020 for a total of approximately \$1.8 million. She stated that TPB staff received 18 applications for the FY 2025 solicitation period totaling \$1.5 million in funding requests. She described the project panel selection process and stated that the total program funding for this year is \$480,000.

Janie Nham described the following recommended projects:

- City of Frederick – South Jefferson Street engineering design to improve safety
- Montgomery County – Randolph Road Safety Improvement Project preliminary engineering designs for safety improvements along a 1.3-mile segment of Randolph Road in the Glenmont-Wheaton area.
- Prince George’s County – Study of methods for collecting, analyzing, and using data related to near misses, which are traffic events that have the potential to lead to injury, fatality, or physical damage that are not yet actualized.
- City of Alexandria – Seminary Road Safety Improvements Project to identify and develop conceptual designs for safety improvements on the segment of Seminary Road between North Beauregard Street and the city line.
- Arlington County – South George Mason Drive and South Four Mile Run Drive intersection alternatives analysis project
- City of Falls Church – Wilson Boulevard Safety Improvements Project which will develop conceptual design plans for multimodal improvements along Wilson Boulevard between Arlington Boulevard and John Marshall Drive/North McKinley Road.

Janie Nham said that upon board approval, TPB staff will coordinate with relevant jurisdictions to finalize project scope. She said that the project kickoff will be in fall 2024 with an anticipated completion date of June 30, 2025.

David Snyder said that the program is an initiative that arose out of an attentive look at highway safety. He stated that safety statistics are still not good and urged TPB members to approve the project recommendations.

The board voted unanimously to approve the FY 2025 Regional Roadway Safety Program projects.

8. NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN: VISUALIZE 2050

Providing an overview of how this item would proceed, Chairman Henderson said TPB staff would provide an introduction and then representatives from the state departments of transportation from Virginia and Maryland would each speak about projects for which public comments had been received. Following those remarks, motions and seconds would be sought to approve the resolution. TPB members would then have the opportunity to provide comments. Following that, the board would vote.

Referring to the posted material, Cristina Finch explained that at the conclusion of this item, the board would be asked to vote to advance a subset of the region's future transportation projects that are significant for the air quality conformity analysis to ensure that the region's plan for major transportation investments will achieve air quality standards in the future. She said that TPB member agencies and staff have been working on this plan for the last year and a half as part of a zero-based budgeting process. She

said the public has been engaged throughout the process. She said the package before the board for approval includes a revised mix of regionally significant transit and highway projects, including changes to the proposed expansion of express lanes network, changes to roadway projects, including repurposing some travel lanes, and choosing to not widen roads in some locations. She said it also includes more active transportation projects as multimodal components of these regionally significant projects.

Cristina Finch said the board would be asked to take action on Item 8A in the agenda packet, which includes a proposed mix of highway and transit projects to be included in the federally required regional air quality conformity analysis and the regional transportation system performance analysis. This list of projects was in the resolution's Attachment 4. In addition, she said the board would be asked to approve the tolls and other assumptions for conducting the analysis within the scope of work, which was in the resolution as Attachment 3, including the COG-approved Round 10 cooperative forecast for future population employment and households, the models used to conduct the travel demand and emissions analysis, the years of analysis, non-transportation inputs to the models, and roadway and transit operating parameters.

Cristina Finch said that Item 8B included six letters included with the memo and posted on the webpage.

Cristina Finch described the remainder of the schedule for approving the new plan. She said that in April of 2025, the TPB will review analysis results and the draft plan and program. These two documents will also be available for public review and comment. In June of next year, the TPB will be asked to approve the final Visualize 2050 plan, the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program, and the results from the air quality conformity analysis.

David Reid asked Cristina Finch to confirm that the 495 Southside Express Lanes would provide the opportunity for express bus services.

Cristina Finch answered that yes, the express lanes project would allow for transit.

Bill Cuttler said that Virginia had submitted a portfolio of projects, but he focused his remarks on the 495 Southside Express Lanes. He said this project would be the final 11 miles for Northern Virginia to complete Northern Virginia's express lanes, with the proposal of continuing it into Maryland and Prince George's County. These would be managed lanes that ensure reliable travel times, and they would be managed through tolls but he noted that the tolls would be eliminated if a vehicle has three or more occupants. He repeated that the lanes would accommodate express bus services. He said the lanes will connect to an existing network of 94 miles of express lanes that already exist in Northern Virginia, and noted the project incentivizes economic growth, as it provides reliable trips and mobility for users and sees as opportunities for improving travel connections to National Harbor, MGM Casino, and other facilities in Prince George's County, in Fairfax County, in Alexandria..

Speaking about transit services in the corridor and across the bridge, Bill Cuttler said that the Express Lanes would allow HOV3 vehicles for free and would also provide a guideway for buses. He cited Metro's bus NH4 line today that crosses the Wilson Bridge in the conventional lanes with the rest of the traffic in congestion. The Express lanes provide the Metrobus or any other local bus service reliable travel conditions which will help grow that customer base in the future for when our region is prepared for Metrorail to cross the Wilson Bridge. He noted that concessionaire agreements for these projects provide a percentage of revenues to transit.

He said that VDOT supports the Wilson Bridge eventually transitioning to Metrorail, as was written in the Commissioner's letter in the agenda packet. He said that VDOT was looking to make the best use of this existing asset of the Wilson Bridge that 20 year ago was designed to set aside space for transit, yet has been unused for transit for over 20 years.

Bill Cuttler said that if consensus could not be reached at the meeting, VDOT would be open to the possibility of delaying this particular project decision for another month.

Eric Olson said that he believed the board had not reached consensus to support this project. He said he would be offering an amendment to remove this project.

Monique Ashton asked if a portion of the tolls collected through this project would be designated for Maryland and if there were going to be any caps on the tolls charged.

Bill Cuttler said that because this project crosses the river, Maryland would receive a percentage of the monies that would be agreed upon by contract with the concessionaire.

To a question about a cap on tolls, Bill Cuttler answered that no, when the demand is greatest, the tolls would go up until demand was curtailed. He reiterated, however, that HOV3 vehicles would use the lanes for free.

Chair Henderson noted that the District of Columbia has a piece of the Wilson Bridge, and therefore, she wondered if D.C. would receive a portion of the revenue.

Bill Cuttler said that VDOT would be open to discussing that point with the District of Columbia.

Chair Henderson asked how HOV restrictions are enforced.

Bill Cuttler said that vehicles claiming HOV3 status would be subject to observation by the concessionaires.

James Walkinshaw asked Bill Cuttler to expand upon the language in the letter discussing the inclusion in the 2000 NEPA study and the pending NEPA submission and the legal enforceability of the reversion of right-of-way to rail. He asked how that would be enforced.

Bill Cuttler said there are two enforcement opportunities. One is the NEPA document, and the second is the concessionaire agreement. He said the NEPA document would include a commitment to include Metrorail in the future, and the federal government would be able to hold VDOT accountable for that. He said the concessionaire agreement would explicitly state the region's intent is to transition to Metrorail in the future.

James Walkinshaw asked if the transit study for the project provided bus ridership numbers that would be estimated as a result of the project.

Bill Cuttler did not have the forecast ridership numbers from that study, but he did emphasize that the experience in Virginia has been significant reduction in travel times which directly lends to reliability of bus travel and this would help get more people across in buses.

Mr. Letourneau asked if the concessionaire would be responsible for the actual conversion of pavement to rail and about VDOT's thoughts on the length of time for the agreement?

Bill Cuttler said that the concessionaire would not be required to construct the conversion to rail. He said they did not anticipate there to be a major additional expense for the conversion to Metrorail because the deck on the bridge is there to be used for rail. Regarding the timing of the agreement, Mr. Cuttler said that is something that has to be negotiated with the concessionaire recognizing that the time would have to work for the concessionaire willing to put the money up front to build a multibillion-dollar project. He said the time entertained would allow for the conversion within it and could conceivably be something like converting from two lanes in each direction to a one lane in each direction.

Jennifer Boysko said she represents the area in Fairfax County where the 495 NEXT project, which extends the Beltway HOT lanes north toward the American Legion Bridge, is located. She said the constituents are very unhappy with the congestion caused by the project. She asked what kind of assurances VDOT can provide that residents would not see the same kind of multi-hour congestion with the 495 Southside Express Lanes.

Bill Cuttler said that before the 495 NEXT project started there was already substantial congestion between Virginia and Maryland across the American Legion Bridge. He said that when the NEXT project is complete, he believes conditions will be much better. He said VDOT seeks to minimize impacts, but he did acknowledge that construction-related congestion comes with these kinds of projects.

Jennifer Boysko asked if the ramp construction for the new project would take future rail into consideration.

Bill Cuttler said yes, they would seek to develop that part of the project now so as to minimize the need for reconstruction later at the time that Metrorail would be added.

Drew Morrison from MDOT provided remarks in response to comments received regarding Maryland projects. He said that MDOT is not actively pursuing study or construction of the I-495 east of the I-270 spur, so therefore to avoid confusion and respond to comments, MDOT was removing the set of studies related to that location from the regional plan.

Regarding the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project, he reaffirmed MDOT's support for the project. He said the state is actively studying that project, including launching a NEPA study. He did note, however, that the project does not yet have full financial commitments to permit it to be included as a project for construction that would be part of the long-range plan conformity analysis.

Will Pines, administrator for State Highway Administration, said the State of Maryland requested the Visualize 2050 plan move forward with the NEPA Record of Decision from the I-270 in order to avoid delays in advancing the important multimodal and transit elements of the project. He said that MDOT has worked with Montgomery County to reaffirm advancement of those transit commitments in the program, and has formalized this through the proposed resolution before the board. MDOT has also worked with the city of Rockville to formally deemphasize Segment D, as shown by the decision to shift out, per the request, to 2045, recognizing that the state has no funds committed to work in this area and no near-term plans to do so. Further, the state has committed to a complete engagement process with stakeholders prior to any advancements in the Record of Decision that would occur prior to any advancements in Segment D.

Mr. Morrison said that the base resolution maintains language from 2021 that the state agreed upon with Montgomery County on the American Legion Bridge/270 project related to transit commitments. He said the state is committed to working with Montgomery County over the next year to further solidify what that framework looks like. He said that MDOT will also be introducing language related to MDOT's commitments to Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Montgomery County.

Reuben Collins said he wanted to emphasize that SMRT is a regional project. He said the level of funding already dedicated to the project, including federal earmarks, should provide sufficient indication of a financial commitment for it to be included in the regional plan's constrained list of projects for conformity analysis.

Eric Olson thanked MDOT for their collaboration in removing the study of toll lanes on I-495 east of the I-270 spur. He also echoed Reuben Collins' comments regarding the SMRT. He said that project should be added to the constrained list of projects in the long-range plan as soon as possible.

Monique Ashton thanked MDOT for the changes made in the I-270 project related to Segment D. She said she understood from MDOT that it could not be removed, although that is what Rockville would have wanted. She asked why it could not be changed from a “construct” project to a “study.” Mr. Morrison said the NEPA Record of Decision treats the full section from the Parkway up to I-370 (Segments A, B, C, and D) as a singular selected alternative. As such, the project could not be cut up into discrete phases.

Monique Ashton asked if it is possible that a future administration could put toll lanes in the City of Rockville through this project.

Mr. Morrison said that it is true that a future administration would have a Record of Decision that includes toll lanes for this segment.

Chair Henderson moved approval of Resolution R12-2024, approving the scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis, including the list of transit and highway projects proposed by member agencies authorizing staff to commence with the analysis for the Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP.

The motion was seconded by David Reid.

Kanti Srikanth briefly explained the TPB’s parliamentary procedures. He described the amendment process, including friendly and unfriendly amendments. He said that after a vote is taken, the TPB bylaws permit any member to request a proportional vote, which is essentially a weighted voting system. He said that under the simple vote, every vote is counted as one vote and the board’s decision is determined by simple majority. Under the weighted vote or proportional vote, every vote is calibrated to the proportion of the jurisdiction’s population in the region. TPB staff uses a spreadsheet with a formula to calculate the results. He said that in a weighted vote, abstentions are not treated like “no” votes; abstentions are distributed to those who are present and are proportionately allocated to how those votes are cast.

Drew Morrison proposed an amendment to amend the base resolution to adjust the horizon year to 2045 for Segment D, which is the segment from Northwest Lake Terrace to I-370. The amendment would also reinforce the state’s commitment to engage with the jurisdictions along the corridor and to continue to evaluate the sections of the corridor throughout the process.

Chair Henderson accepted the amendment as friendly. The amendment language was displayed on the screen.

Eric Olson made a motion for an amendment to remove the I-95/I-495 Southside Express Lanes toll project in Virginia from R12-2024.

Oluseyi Olugbenle seconded the motion.

Speaking about his motion, Eric Olson said that now is not the time to move this project forward because it is still in a study phase. He highlighted serious concerns in Prince George’s County that this project would move the bottleneck into Maryland. He further noted that public comments received were largely in opposition to the project. He said his motion would remove this project as a construction project, but it could remain as a study like the SMRT.

Oluseyi Olugbenle thanked VDOT for engaging with the county about the I-95/I-495 Southside Express Lanes project and making some changes. But she said there remained too many unanswered questions. She noted the lack of public support for the project in the November 2023 Southside Express Lane study.

James Walkinshaw called attention to a letter from Fairfax County Chairman McKay which outlined the county's position. He noted that this is the only remaining swath of Northern Virginia that does not have express lanes, which means this area does not have access to reliable and efficient bus service. He said it also happens to be a swath of Northern Virginia that has a disproportionate number of COG's Equity Emphasis Areas. He said that a DRPT study found that 8,000 bus riders could have access to bus service crossing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge every day if this project were to move forward. He further noted that if at any point Maryland was not supportive, it will not be built in Maryland.

James Walkinshaw said that Fairfax County supported the inclusion of this project in Visualize 2050, but because time was short and the project warranted additional discussion, he offered a friendly amendment to remove the project from the resolution currently under consideration and add it as an item for consideration at the TPB's June meeting.

Eric Olson accepted this amendment to the amendment. The motion was seconded.

Oluseyi Olugbenle said she agreed to the proposed delay in consideration, but she noted that the NEPA study will not be completed by the next meeting. She said the county's position was clear at this point.

Sharon Pandak said that Chair Henderson and David Reid would need to accept the amendment as a friendly amendment to their motion.

Chair Henderson and David Reid accepted the amendment as friendly.

Jeanette Rishell spoke in favor of the project list as it was submitted. She said the Southside Express Lanes project is important for regional connectivity and economic vitality. She said the project development done by staff was thorough and collaborative. She said it is important to remember that different areas have different needs and we should not be taking a narrow, ideological approach to developing projects.

Mr. Canek from the City of Alexandria noted that he was in support of the motion as it stands now.

Monique Ashton asked for TPB staff to comment on whether a motion to change Segment D of the Maryland Express lanes project from construct to study project could not happen, as MDOT has suggested in their letter.

Kanti Srikanth said that TPB staff does not have expertise in NEPA, so he would defer to MDOT's assessment. However, he said he did understand that when a federal agency issues its record on decision on a project it is doing so for all aspects of the project recognizing that the overall effectiveness of the project is derived from all of the aspects of the project. As such the ability to change this segment from construct to study would have to be looked at the what the record of decision for the project sees as the contribution from this segment and any action would be incumbent on what is in the language of the Record of Decision.

Monique Ashton again thanked MDOT for working with Rockville, but she said she needed to protect the residents of Rockville and in this project, Rockville would be losing a free lane. She said the city was concerned about equity and congestion.

Haley Peckett, speaking for Montgomery County DOT, thanked MDOT for working with the county on transit commitments. Speaking on behalf of County Executive Mark Elrich, she said the county agrees on the importance of the bridge in terms of overall regional mobility, but she wanted to echo Rockville's concerns, specifically about Segment D. The construction and capacity impacts of that segment on the residents of Rockville and Montgomery County are not a high priority in terms of congestion. She said

they looked forward to working with MDOT and other partners around the region to see how the project might be refined.

David Snyder said a huge amount of work has been done by everyone, and the effort to find consensus is really remarkable. However, as an observation, he noted that this is more of a plan for 2024 than for 2050. He said he did not see thematic development to make this a vision plan for the coming decades. He noted that the project list does not address what the TPB wants this region to be in 2050 in addition to responding to the very legitimate needs and desires of today. He said he will be supporting the resolution, but he did hope that in the future he would like to see more specificity on how the plan meets the region's commitments to equity, the environment, and safety over the long term.

Kanti Srikanth reiterated that the board would be voting on Resolution R12-2024 as amended to include the language from Maryland Department of Transportation. On top of that, the resolution was amended to remove the I-495/Southside Express Lanes project from the list of projects for approval today with a commitment that consideration of that project would be an action item for the TPB at its meeting on June 20. He specified that the project to be removed was line 373 on the list of projects.

The motion to approve Resolution R12-2024, as amended, was approved with a "no" vote from Monique Ashton.

9. TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (TRIP) UPDATE

Referring to the posted material, Katherine Rainone said that the draft Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan for the region had been made available and she looked forward to getting comments from TPB members. She said that at the June meeting, she would provide a full presentation on the draft plan. She said the TPB would be asked to approve the plan in June.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Henderson noted that the TPB would be meeting on June 20, which is a Thursday.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:03 P.M.