



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director  
**SUBJECT:** Public Comment for the September 2024 TPB Meeting  
**DATE:** September 18, 2024

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The Transportation Planning Board accepts public comment on a rolling basis. Comments can be submitted via email ([tpbcomment@mwkog.org](mailto:tpbcomment@mwkog.org)), online ([mwkog.org/tpbcomment](http://mwkog.org/tpbcomment)), mail, and phone. Comments are collected until noon on the day before the TPB meeting. These comments are compiled and shared with the board at the meeting the following day.

Between noon Tuesday, July 16 and noon Tuesday September 17 the TPB received three letters and one comment submitted via email.

The comments are summarized below. All full comments are attached to this memo.

### IN-PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS

Two people signed up to speak during the Item 1 Public Comment item:

- Richard Parsons, Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance
- Jason Stanford, Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### George “Tad” Aburn- Comments via Letter- July 22, 2024

Mr. Aburn provided a copy of the letter he submitted to the Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC) which requests the committee act on recommendations they received from the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC). The letter references the TPB’s development of an updated transportation sector greenhouse gas emission reduction plan. Mr. Aburn says that the plan is based on outdated and weak regional goals which means the TPB is ignoring more difficult transportation strategies.

#### Barbara Coufal- Comments via Letter- September 17, 2024

Ms. Coufal writes on behalf of the Citizens Against Beltway Expansion to urge the TPB to insist on a third modeling scenario alternative to the Southside Beltway Expansion in the Visualize 2050 plan. They urge that the third scenario include WMATA’s plans to extend the blue line over Woodrow Wilson Bridge, as well as supplemental transit, bike and walk projects, expanded travel demand, and transit-oriented land use.

#### Bill Pugh- Comments via Letter- September 17, 2024

The Coalition for Smarter Growth writes urging the TPB to adopt an alternative Constrained Long-Range Plan that prioritizes transit, walkable and transit-oriented land use, and travel demand

management, consistent with TPB and COG's policy framework, and that strives to meet greenhouse gas and equity goals. They note an alternative regional transportation and land use scenario was a key component of the Board's 2021 resolution that directed the Visualize 2050 process to consider multiple build scenarios and their impact on the region's greenhouse gas and other targets, but the Visualize 2050 process currently only devotes resources to modeling an additional scenario to serve VDOT's 495 Southside Express Lanes project. A third modeling scenario would be invaluable work for regional decision-making.

They provide resolution language for the TPB's consideration.

**Marjory Donn-Comments via Email-August 19, 2024**

This was a form letter used by the email campaigns launched earlier which included content urging the TPB Board to reject the currently proposed I-495 Express Lane project.

## Laura Bachle

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**From:** George Aburn <tadaburn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2024 7:36 AM  
**To:** Ivey, Jolene; Jeffrey King; Takis Karantonis  
**Cc:** Chris Hoagland -MDE-; Dshprentz@gmail.com; HERBERT SIMMENS; James Wang; Julie Kimmel; MWAQCPublic Comment; Mandell, Alexander; Noble Smith -MDE-; TPBcomment; William Washburn; anne@chesapeakeclimate.org; callen@dccouncil.gov; chenderson@dccouncil.gov; mark.stewart1@maryland.gov; pmmecca@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Public Comment Letter for 7/24/24 CEEPC Meeting - Act On the ACPAC Recommendations  
**Attachments:** CEEPC Letter 07242024 Final Act on ACPAC Recommendations.pdf

Chairwoman Ivey, Past Chair Karantonis - again, thank you for the amazing work you do.

I am respectfully requesting that you take action on the ACPAC recommendations during your meeting this Wednesday.

Please see the attached letter.

The ACPAC recommendations were approved by unanimous vote - focus on the need for urgent action on climate change - and were submitted to CEEPC before your last meeting over two months ago.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this issue.

Please make sure the COG staff distributes public comment to the Committee.

Tad Aburn  
Volunteer for Several MD and DC Communities  
Retired MD Air Director

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July 22, 2024

Jolene Ivey, Chair, Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)  
Takis Karantonis, Immediate Past Chair, CEEPC  
CEEPC Committee Members  
777 North Capitol St. N.E.  
Suite 300,  
Washington, DC 20002

Chair Ivey, Immediate Past Chair Karantonis, CEEPC members:

I am writing to ask that as part of your July 24, 2024 meeting, you discuss and act on the recommendation from the region's Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC). ACPAC submitted their urgent recommendation to CEEPC over two months ago, before your last meeting on May 22, 2024. The ACPAC Chair also provided a short briefing on this recommendation on the 22nd. CEEPC does not meet again until late September.

The ACPAC recommendation which was approved by a unanimous vote of ACPAC urges CEEPC to treat the climate change crisis with a much greater sense of urgency and to update the outdated regional climate change goals to be more consistent with the science and more representative of goals used by other leadership organizations like Montgomery County and the State of Maryland.

One of the reasons that it is critical for CEEPC to act quickly is that the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is developing an updated transportation sector greenhouse gas emission reduction plan based upon the outdated and very weak regional goals that are now in place at MWCOG. What this means is that the TPB plan is ignoring many of the

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<sup>1</sup> As background, my name is Tad Aburn. I have submitted comments at every TPB meeting since 11/22. I was a MD resident for 68 years. I am now retired and doing volunteer work for overburdened communities in PG County and DC. I am also a member of the DC EJ Coalition. I was the Chair of MWAQC TAC multiple times. I was an MWAQC member for over 15 years. For almost 20 years I was the Director of the air pollution program in Maryland. I worked for MDE for 40 years. I was a two-term President and long-time SIP policy Committee Chair with the NACAA.

more difficult transportation strategies as they, because of the weak goals, appear to not be needed.

Thank you again for allowing public input. I would be happy to discuss my concerns during a future meeting or with a smaller group of CEEPC leadership.

*George S. Aburn Jr*

Tad Aburn  
Volunteer for Several Maryland and DC Communities  
Retired MDE Air Director

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cc:

Charles Allen, Chair MWCOG BOD  
Crisitna Henderson, Chair TPB  
Kenny Boddye, Chair, MWAQC  
Anita Bonds, Vice Chair, MWAQC  
Tom Dernoga, Vice Chair, MWAQC  
Julie Kimmel, Chair, ACPAC  
Willaim Washburn, Vice Chair, ACPAC  
Anne Haverman, Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)

**Laura Bachle**

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**From:** bcoufal10@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2024 10:06 AM  
**To:** TPBcomment  
**Subject:** Item 1. Virtual Comment Opportunity  
**Attachments:** TPB letter re SEL Sept. 2024.docx

While I am not requesting an opportunity to speak to the TPB at tomorrow's meeting, I am submitting the attached comment letter and request that it be included in your report of comments for the meeting.

Please contact me if you have trouble viewing this letter or have other concerns.

Barbara Coufal  
Citizens Against Beltway Expansion



September 17, 2024

Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capitol St. NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chair Henderson and Transportation Planning Board Members:

I write with respect to Visualize 2050 and the I-495 Southside Express Lanes.

- The Visualize 2050 process has a second scenario solely for modeling VDOT's 495 Southside Express Lanes.
- We urge the members of the TPB to insist on a third modeling scenario that would include WMATA's plan to extend the Blue Line over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, as an alternative to highway expansion. Alternative analyses are required by the TPB's 2021 resolution.
- We also urge that a third scenario include other regional solutions including supplemental transit, bike and walk projects, expanded travel demand management programs, combined with transit-oriented land use.

The Virginia Dept. of Transportation (VDOT) has not considered alternative build scenarios in its study of the Southside Express Lanes. There is no doubt that extending the Blue Line, as planned by WMATA, would more effectively address transportation challenges. Yet, the Southside Lanes would block a future extension of the Blue Line over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. In addition to modeling an extension of the Blue Line, modeling should include regional alternative solutions including rail and other transit and walk and bike projects, combined with transit-oriented land use and expanded travel demand management programs which would better meet regional goals for access, climate, and equity.

To our knowledge, VDOT has not engaged local jurisdictions in the types of analyses needed for the Southside Lanes project and for developing alternatives to extending private toll lanes. We urge VDOT to engage local jurisdictions and the public in the 495 Southside corridor now on the additional analyses and alternatives that need to be studied.

The plan to model only the toll lanes proposal is inadequate and flawed. We respectfully request TPB members to insist on including in the Visualize 2050 analysis a third scenario that would model alternative regional solutions, including Metro's plan to extend the Blue Line.

Sincerely,

Barbara Coufal, Chair  
Citizens Against Beltway Expansion



## Laura Bachle

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**From:** Bill Pugh <bill@smartergrowth.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2024 11:47 AM  
**To:** TPBcomment  
**Cc:** Stewart Schwartz  
**Subject:** Item 1 Virtual Comment Opportunity  
**Attachments:** Visualize 2050 third conformity scenario draft resolution Sep 2024.pdf

Dear TPB staff,

Please read this comment to the TPB board at its September 18 meeting:

Chair Henderson and TPB board members,

- An alternative regional transportation and land use scenario was a key component of the Board's 2021 resolution that directed the Visualize 2050 process to consider multiple build scenarios and their impact on the region's greenhouse gas and other targets.
- At this point, the Visualize 2050 process will only devote resources to modeling an additional scenario to serve VDOT's 495 Southside Express Lanes project.
- A third scenario - a constrained plan prioritizing transit and ped-bike improvements combined with transit-oriented land use and travel demand management - using the regional air conformity model - would be groundbreaking and invaluable work for regional decisionmaking.
- Today the Coalition for Smarter Growth asks you again to include this alternate scenario in the Visualize 2050 process and fulfill the board's resolution R19-2021.
- Attached is a draft resolution to assist this effort.

Thank you for your work,

**Bill Pugh, AICP CTP** | Senior Policy Fellow  
**Coalition for Smarter Growth**  
[www.smartergrowth.net](http://www.smartergrowth.net) | @betterDCregion  
[bill@smartergrowth.net](mailto:bill@smartergrowth.net)

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** TPB Chair, Hon. Christina Henderson, and TPB board member smart growth supporters

**From:** Bill Pugh and Stewart Schwartz

**Date:** September 5, 2024

**Re:** **Visualize 2050 process resolution for third conformity scenario**

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In June TPB decided to spend an extra six months to model two Visualize 2050 air quality conformity scenarios to serve VDOT's 495 Southside project. Meanwhile, TPB has so far failed to comply with Board resolution R-19-2021 that Visualize 2050 must consider multiple build scenarios to meet climate and equity goals. This schedule extension provides an opportunity during the remaining Visualize 2050 process for TPB to model the missing regional scenario: an alternative Constrained Long-Range Plan that prioritizes transit, walkable and transit-oriented land use, and travel demand management, consistent with TPB and COG's policy framework, and that strives to meet greenhouse gas and equity goals.

Below, we provide a draft resolution that outlines the need, feasibility, and value of this third scenario. This would finally provide the apples-to-apples comparison of achievable regional solutions with the status quo CLRP – something extremely informative for decision makers and stakeholders in DC region transportation, land use, housing, and climate change initiatives.

### **Draft TPB Board resolution for third Visualize 2050 scenario**

WHEREAS, TPB resolution R-19-2021 adopted in 2021 requires the development of Visualize 2050 to consider multiple build scenarios. The board discussions at the time referred to development of an alternative CLRP that would be developed to meet TPB climate, equity, multimodal and land use goals and modeled and analyzed in parallel with the draft conformity inputs; and

WHEREAS, subsequently, TPB approved Resolution R-18-2022 to adopt even stronger greenhouse gas reduction and climate change resilience goals, including a target to reduce on-road transportation emissions by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030; and

WHEREAS, to date in the Visualize 2050 process, TPB has not adequately considered multiple build scenarios or climate change impacts of draft projects in the zero-based budgeting process; and

WHEREAS, TPB adopted resolution R-13-2024 in June 2024 to conduct an additional Visualize 2050 air quality conformity scenario solely for the purpose of analyzing the Virginia Department

of Transportation's 495 Southside Express Lanes project, and thereby extending the Visualize 2050 schedule by six months and requiring additional staff resources for this work; and

WHEREAS, TPB has conducted scenario studies in the past using "sketch models," but has not analyzed a combined regional transit, transit-oriented land use, and travel demand management scenario using a constrained package of projects and the regional transportation and air quality conformity models; and

WHEREAS, the current Visualize 2050 process will be the last TPB constrained long-range plan to be adopted and approved by the federal government before 2030, the year of TPB's greenhouse gas reduction target, a crucial climate action milestone year shared by MWCOG, many TPB member jurisdictions, the Biden Administration, and the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, public comments on the Visualize 2050 draft project list and on the Visualize 2045 plan have overwhelmingly asked for more priority given to transit and pedestrian/bicycle projects, walkable transit-oriented land use, and travel demand management programs; for fewer highway and arterial capacity expansion projects; and for more projects and programs that will help the region meet its climate and equity goals; and

WHEREAS, the current Visualize 2050 process can be extended to allow plan completion by summer 2026 and meet the end-of-year Federal approval deadline.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board directs staff to:

1. Convene a process to develop a regional transit, walkable and transit-oriented land use, and travel demand management scenario using a constrained package of projects for analysis and informational purposes (not as an official federal conformity package of regionally significant projects and model inputs);
2. Model and analyze this third scenario using the regional transportation air quality conformity model in parallel with modeling of the two official conformity scenarios; and
3. Use the results to inform consideration of and potential changes to the draft Visualize 2050 package of projects and plan goals, objectives and policies, and to inform other activities of TPB and its member agencies.

## Laura Bachle

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**From:** Marjory Donn <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 10:22 AM  
**To:** TPBcomment  
**Subject:** Remove the Southside Express Lanes from Visualize 2050

Transportation Planning Board ,

Dear TPB Member:

When the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meets this month to finalize Visualize 2050, I urge you to vote to remove the Southside Express Lanes from the transportation plan. Construction of the Southside Express Lanes would block a future extension of Metro's Blue Line over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Instead of resolving congestion, it would shift a bottleneck from Springfield to Oxon Hill. Moreover, the Southside Express Lanes are inconsistent with TPB's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is currently studying a plan to extend the Blue Line, including an extension over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. A Blue Line extension would not only address congestion in a more effective way than adding toll lanes to the Beltway, but do so in a sustainable way. WMATA's plan would also provide new transit service to many communities including Alexandria, Rosslyn, Georgetown, Downtown DC, Navy Yard, Buzzard Point, St. Elizabeths, Forest Heights, Oxon Hill and National Harbor.

The existing bottleneck at Springfield is emblematic of an inherent defect in toll lanes: They induce more traffic and then create severe congestion where toll lanes end and that traffic must merge into general lanes. VDOT's plan to shift congestion to Oxon Hill and block future Metrorail would worsen regional transportation conditions.

We urge members of the TPB to remove the Southside Express Lanes from Visualize 2050.

Marjory Donn  
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