
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

May 20, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Phil Mendelson - DC Council
Charles Allen - DC Council
Samuel Stephens - DC Council
Jim Sebastian - DC DOT
Mark Rawlings - DC DOT
Kristin Calkins - DC Office of Planning
Kelly Russell - City of Frederick
Neil Harris - Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordan - Greenbelt
Dennis Enslinger - Gaithersburg
Evan Glass - Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich - Montgomery County Executive Office
Deni Taveras - Prince George's County
Terry Bellamy - Prince George's County Executive Office
Victor Weissberg - Prince George's County Executive Office
Bridget Newton - Rockville
Kacy Kostiuk - Takoma Park
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. - Maryland DOT
Jeffrey Hirsch - Maryland DOT
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Christian Dorsey - Arlington County
David Meyer - City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn - Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw - Fairfax County
Rodney Lusk - Fairfax County
Malcolm Watson - Fairfax County
Matthew Letourneau - Loudoun County
Kristin Umstad - Loudoun County
Robert Brown - Loudoun County
Pamela J. Sebesky - City of Manassas
Jeanette Rishell - City of Manassas Park
Victor Angry - Prince William County
Rene'e Hamilton - Virginia DOT
Shyam Kannan - WMATA
Sandra Jackson - FHWA - D.C.
Daniel Koenig - FTA
Julia Koster - NCPC
Shyam Kannan - WMATA

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Chuck Bean
Lyn Erickson
Mark Moran
Andrew Meese
Tim Canan
Sergio Rittaco
Bryan Hayes
Andrew Austin
John Swanson
John Schermann
Dusan Vuksan
Deborah Etheridge
Nicole McCall
Andrew Zalewski – Four Square ITP
Kurt Erickson – Washington Regional Alcohol Program

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

Chair Russell called the meeting to order. She said that the meeting will use the same procedures for questions and comments that it used at the previous online meetings. She said that the meeting would start with 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 email was received. The comment was submitted by Mr. Kandasamy.

Mr. Kandasamy, in an email, requested that slug pickup locations be added to the Commuter Connections website, outreach, and promotional materials, and the Visualize 2045 long-range plan. During this pandemic, all transportation systems are losing riders, but slugging is unique in that it is not losing money. He said slugging is a volunteer system. He said that slugging reduces vehicle trips. He said slugging provides transportation and is also a community-building tool.

2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 15, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the minutes from the April TPB meeting.

Mr. Jordan seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with one abstention from Mr. Letourneau.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

There were no comments or questions about the Technical Committee Report.

4. CAC AND AFA REPORT

There were no comments or questions about the Citizens Advisory Committee Report.

Ms. Kostiuk said that members of the AFA committee were asked to share the challenges that they have seen for their staff and the people they serve. She said that the feedback was very useful.

Ms. Kostiuk summarized the feedback. She said that So Others Might Eat reported challenges related to

the use of public transportation. In particular, they are experiencing unreliability, safety concerns, and unannounced changes in routes, which make it hard for staff and clients to get to their places of employment and medical appointments. The Star Program in Arlington reported that ridership in their paratransit programs has decreased. Their service providers are taking extensive measures to keep vehicles clean and sanitary, but independent drivers have stopped driving, resulting in some availability shortages. The Arc of Prince William reported that their all-day services are closed, and their residential programs are stay-in-place. Only necessary medical appointments have transportation services. The Jewish Council for the Aging said that community partners have changed how they provide services in response to the pandemic. They have also pivoted to only providing transportation for medical appointments. Many of their drivers have decided to stay home. Some of the providers have switched from driving people to delivering groceries. IT Curbs reported that they heard from municipalities making them aware of funding for transportation of disadvantaged people.

Ms. Umstatt asked if the TPB is reaching out to all entities in the region that provide these types of transportation services. She wanted to know how this input was collected.

Ms. Kostiuk said that in this case staff reached out to members of the Access for All Advisory Committee and asked for information so they could share it with the board.

Ms. Srikanth said that through the Enhanced Mobility grant program, COG works with non-profit organizations that provide these types of services and that staff would follow up with them to understand what issues these service providers were facing. He said that while the CARES Act did not include funding for some of those programs, he is aware of efforts nationwide asking for another round of funding, CARES Act 2, and hopefully that would come through with funding for these programs.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chair Russell said that the Director's Report includes a letter from the TPB to the region's Congressional delegation informing them about the need for special funding for local and state governments to help them offset anticipated reduction in local and state transportation funds due to the pandemic. She said that many national organizations have sent similar letters, including COG. She reminded the board that they discussed this letter at the April TPB meeting.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The chair made no remarks.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. SAFETY STUDY DEEPER DIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Mr. Schermann provided a presentation on a deeper dive on the TPB's regional safety study. This briefing presented the results of deeper dive analyses into crashes involving pedestrians, crashes at or near intersections, and crashes along major arterials. The deeper dive into the data on crashes involving pedestrians included information about location, age of the driver, number of crashes by time of day, day of the week, and more. The analysis provided another snapshot into what factors may affect crashes. The other two deeper dives looked at the factors involved in crashes at intersections and along major arterials.

Mr. Allen asked if the study had a breakdown of the data on pedestrian crashes by location and if there is information about the infrastructure there and whether there was a marked crosswalk or legal right-turn on red.

Mr. Corey explained that that the study did not get to that granular level of data and the study team is

interested in seeing if they can get more of that data.

Mr. Allen also noted that it would be helpful to take a deeper look into the jurisdiction-level data to see if there are disparities within jurisdictions like differences between the east and western parts of the District.

Mr. Schermann noted that the study has data on locations of each crash and plans to create a GIS map to look at sub-jurisdiction levels.

Mr. Weissburg asked for a deeper dive into the locations of crashes. He was also interested in the road maintenance or ownership types, speed limits, and if the locations are in Equity Emphasis Areas.

Mr. Jordan noted that the time of day analysis might not just be due to the light conditions but could also be related to drivers' awareness or how alert a driver is at different times of day.

Ms. Taveras agreed with Mr. Jordan that other factors combine with lighting such as pedestrians with dark clothing make it harder to be seen affecting the number of accidents associated with time of day. She also noted that road ownership information is important with regards to taking action. She also asked for clarification on the time period the data was collected.

Mr. Schermann explained that it is five years of data 2013 through 2017.

Ms. Taveras also said she was interested in the racial breakdown of the people fatally or seriously injured. She noted that information could also help create more targeted marketing campaigns to help educate people on road safety.

Mr. Glass asked if the information about incidents related to left turns and angles also included information about cross lights or walk signals and if they played a role or were functioning properly.

Mr. Corey explained that much of that data was not available in the crash reports. The data available includes in crash reports and could conceivably be compared with other geographical or location specific data to understand the role of factors such as presence or absence of crosswalks or walk signals .

Mr. Schermann explained that he was interested in working with member jurisdictions, if there is interest, on collecting such data or conducting such analysis. Mr. Erenrich noted that the presentation in April focused on behavioral factors and he was interested in the overlap of the behavioral factors and the infrastructure and how much each factor impacts the outcome of a crash.

Mr. Dorsey noted that this work can inform ways to bring together infrastructure improvements with public awareness about behavioral factors. He asked if there was a way to regularly collect information from the crash narratives to provide it to the jurisdictions.

Mr. Schermann explained that if they could find the resources, they would be interested in doing that work.

Mr. Lusk noted that there may be new technology like sensors to help reduce crashes.

Mr. Schermann noted that these technologies like sensors were outside of the scope of the study but noted it would be a great idea to look into.

Mr. Letourneau asked about the crashes on Saturday and Sunday and asked if there was also data on the traffic volume on those days.

Mr. Schermann said he could find that information out.

8. WAHSINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM SAFETY UPDATE

Mr. Erickson said that the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is a 39-year-old public/private partnership formed to fight drunk driving and underage drinking through public education, health education, and advocacy. He said that WRAP, in collaboration with the Council of Governments,

published the 27th annual publication of the How Safe Are Our Roads in January 2020. He explained that the report uses data from 2018 but that the program is in the process of collecting 2019 data. He said he would be focusing on discussing drunk driving fatalities, crashes, injuries and crashes. He said that drunk driving fatalities and injuries went down in 2018 by 1.6% and over 6% respectively. Drunk driving crashes went up by 56% while drunk driving arrests increased by 3.5%, with the District of Columbia increasing its numbers of drunk driving arrests by 8%. More details on these findings can be found on the program briefing. He moved on to share recommendations that be applied on a state, local, or regional level. He spoke about technology, including in-car breathalyzers, ignition interlocks, and alcohol sensor testing. Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia are all localities that require that if you get convicted of a DUI, you have to put an ignition interlock on your vehicle as a condition of a restricted license. He said the problem is that it is not uniformly enforced in the region. He said that studies have shown that sobriety checkpoints can reduce drunk driving fatalities by as much as 20%. He said that the most effective measure to reduce crash-related deaths and injuries is the routine wearing of seatbelts. He said that another recommendation was to increase drug-testing to determine if BAC readings that allow for arrests are being met as a result of use of drugs and alcohol. He said that another recommendation was encouraging alternatives to DUI including programs like Safe Ride, ridesharing, or the expansion of services such as WMATA's reintroduction of weekend hours.

Mr. Snyder thanked both presenters and noted that he hopes that the recommendations from Mr. Erickson would be combined with other strategies that staff is examining to bring to the board. He also said that in light of reports and data about increased speeding during current travel conditions on account of the COVID-19 crisis, he wondered if there were any specific actions that we ought to focus on during the startup phases.

9. DRAFT FINDINGS FROM THE MARKET ASSESSMENT FOR VRE-MARC RUN THROUGH SERVICE

Referring to the handout material, Ms. McCall briefed the board on the results of a TPB study that produced a market assessment and identification of technical considerations for VRE-MARC run-through service in the National Capital Region. She described the origin, background, and purpose of the study. She said the study examined opportunities and potential implications of extending VRE and MARC service beyond Union Station. She identified some of the potential benefits of such enhancements. She said the project's scope included outreach, research, and technical analysis.

Andrew Zalewski, from the consulting firm Foursquare ITP, described the study's methodology, results, and considerations for planning. He said the study found there is significant demand on the production side for run-through trips across a large geography, specifically in Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Baltimore. He said that in terms of where people want to go, the biggest demand was for trips specifically to L'Enfant, represented by 80 percent of the run-through market, followed by Crystal City. To a lesser extent, there were three other markets that showed promise: Alexandria, the Kensington-Rockville segment of the MARC corridor, and Silver Spring. He described variables impacting run-through service, including timing of capacity expansion, possible service models, and existing system resources. He also described considerations for planning, including operations, mechanical considerations, capacity and capital, institutional considerations, and construction/maintenance of traffic.

Ms. McCall closed by describing next steps. She said that several projects are currently underway that support run-through service, including the Virginia Rail Improvement Program, and the Long Bridge environmental impact statement. She said that funding for run-through improvements in Maryland had recently been vetoed by Governor Hogan because of financial implications of the COVID pandemic, but she said the concept had received positive support and there is hope that opportunities lie ahead.

Ms. Soneji thanked TPB staff on behalf of VRE for this work, which she said was very useful.

Mr. Nembhard thanked TPB staff for this work on behalf of MTA. He said he looked forward to follow-up activities.

OTHER ITEMS

10. ADJOURN

No other business was brought before the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:04 pm.