
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

March 18, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

On March 16, 2020, in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic and following guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control, TPB Chair Kelly Russell decided that the March 2020 TPB meeting would be conducted as an online-only, or virtual, meeting. At that time, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia all had declared states of emergency. This decision was made in consultation with the state departments of transportation and board members to conduct the meeting virtually to ensure social distancing measures in the region and for the health and safety of board members, staff, and the Washington region.

The session was conducted online via WebEx and a conference phone line. The live stream and twitter highlights were also available for the public. A roll call was conducted at the beginning of the meeting. For each resolution, members were called upon by state to share their 'Nay' votes and abstentions. All members that did not state 'Nay' or an abstention were understood to have voted to approve the resolution.

The public was invited to submit comments via email for the public comment period in Item 1. One person submitted a comment that was read by TPB staff.

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Phil Mendelson – DC Council
Charles Allen - DC Council
Samuel Stephens – DC Council
Jim Sebastian – DC – DOT
Kristin Calkins – DC Office of Planning
Jason Groth - Charles County
Patrick L. Wojahn – College Park
Ron Burns – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Neil Harris - Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordon – Greenbelt
Evan Glass – Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive Office
Deni Taveras – Prince George’s County
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive Office
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Kacy Kostiuk – Takoma Park
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria
Christian Dorsey – Arlington County
David Meyer – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Kristen Umstatted – Loudoun County

Pamela J. Sebesky – City of Manassas
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Rene’e Hamilton – Virginia DOT
Shyam Kannan – WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA-DC
Daniel Koenig - FTA
Julia Koster – NCPC

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Sergio Ritacco
Lyn Erickson
Andrew Austin
Nick Ramfos
Jane Posey
John Swanson

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

Chair Russell convened the meeting and said she hoped that everyone stays healthy through the pandemic and she encouraged everyone to heed medical advice. She thanked the board for their flexibility in understanding the decision to conduct the TPB’s first ever virtual meeting.

Chair Russell said that after discussion with the two vice-chairs and consultation with TPB staff, she decided, at short notice, to change the meeting from an in-person meeting to a virtual meeting. As a board, the TPB faced the situation of having to act on a few time sensitive matters while also doing its part to help contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus infection through the region’s communities. The options were either to hold the meeting in-person or cancel the meeting this month and hope to take action next month. Staff advised that while deferring action to next month would not have an immediate negative impact on transportation agencies, action would have to be taken very soon—next month or in May— to avoid posing serious fiscal or programmatic challenges for the transportation agencies at the local and state levels. She said she was not sure if the board would be able to meet in person next month.

Chair Russell said that staff conducted a quick poll of how many members could attend the meeting in person. Responses as of Monday morning were such that the board would have been able to just meet the quorum— but even that could have changed by the time the meeting took place on Wednesday. So the thinking of the officers of the board was to not take a chance on having a quorum for the in-person meeting and thus potentially be unable to act on time-sensitive matters. In addition, the officers were determined to take action in a manner that was consistent with the calls being made to avoid large gatherings. Therefore, she and the vice chairs decided to convene a virtual meeting, any potential inconveniences notwithstanding. Since that since the decision was made, new advisories had been issued calling upon the public to avoid gatherings even as large as 10 people. She said she believed that convening a virtual meeting was the right decision and she thanked board members for their understanding and cooperation in participating.

Chair Russell said that consideration of whether or not to convene a virtual meeting highlighted the fact that the current TPB bylaws do not have a provision allowing the board to hold a virtual meeting when the situation warrants it. She said the board was holding this meeting today by invoking emergency privilege. With the board members’ indulgence, she proposed, under unanimous consent, a change to the agenda to add a notice item that at the next board meeting, the TPB will amend its bylaws to add a

provision that would allow the chair, in consultation with the vice chairs and staff director, to convene a virtual meeting so the board will not have to invoke emergency privilege to do this in the future.

Chair Russell turned to the meeting at hand. She said that not being to see each other would pose some challenges for facilitating discussions and votes. She said that staff had worked out an arrangement that will hopefully be acceptable and work to minimize confusion. She outlined the process as planned and said it can be modified, as needed. First, she asked Ms. Erickson to take a roll call of members or alternates to document their presence at the meeting, which will be needed when the board votes on the resolutions. She reminded members that when they speak, they should remember to state their names and jurisdictions.

She said that at this meeting, there would be no verbal reports from the Technical Committee, the Steering Committee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee, although she noted that written reports from those committees had been made available. During those items on the agenda, however, she said she would ask members if they had any questions based on the read-ahead materials provided. Additionally, she said that one informational item on the agenda would be deferred to the next meeting— the demonstration of the High Capacity Transit Interactive Map. Finally, she explained how votes would be conducted. She said that staff wanted to be sure they record the votes correctly. She said that after a motion to adopt a resolution had been made and properly seconded, she would first ask for Abstentions or Nay votes. She asked that members state their names and jurisdictions as they state their vote. She said that those members who are present at the meeting, but are not recorded as Abstentions or Nay votes, would be taken as Yes votes.

There were no questions.

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

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

Ms. Erickson said that one email was received from Mr. Kandasamy. She proceeded to read his email.

Mr. Kandasamy, in his email, requested that slugging be included in the Commuter Connections Work Program. Additionally, he'd like slugging to be featured on the Commuter Connections website, outreach, and promotional materials. He also asked that slugging be included in Visualize 2045. He provided a brief history of slugging in the Washington region and said that slugging provides an economical way to remove SOV trips. He encouraged the TPB to make slugging a priority in their work.

2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 22, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the January 2020 TPB meeting. The motion was approved by the board.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Russell asked if there were any questions regarding the Technical Committee Report.

No questions were asked.

4. CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Russell asked if there were any questions regarding the Citizens Advisory Committee Report.

No questions were asked.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Srikanth referred to a memo on page 39 of his report. He said the memo reviews the preparations for three TPB sponsored workshops on connected and autonomous vehicles. He said that the first of the

workshops, which was scheduled for March 31, had been cancelled. He said that the second and third workshops were scheduled for May 14 and June 17.

No questions were asked.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Russell urged everyone to take seriously advisories from health officials about how to keep families and communities safe. She said that there will be real and difficult impacts on people's lives and on businesses, and that by doing our part to flatten the curve, the region can get through this together.

ACTION ITEMS

7. APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2020 UPWP AND APPROVAL OF FY 2020 CARRYOVER-FUNDING TO FY 2021

Ms. Erickson said that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) categorizes funding into new fiscal year funding (Federal FY 2020), unexpended funding from last year's UPWP (FY 2019), and carryover funding. Carryover funding comes from the current FY 2020 UPWP funding that staff anticipates to not be able to spend by June 30, 2020. She explained that she would be recommending two resolutions for approval. The first would be R10-2020 which is an amendment to the FY 2020 UPWP to pull out carryover funding, and R12-2020 which is an amendment to the FY 2020 UPWP to carry-over this funding into the FY 2021 UPWP. She said that each year the TPB usually carries over between 10-12% of their funding. However, this year the TPB is asking to pull out \$2.859 million which is a little higher than usual. This is due to the amount planned to be carried over to support a 3-year project for the Travel Demand Model. She explained that the approval of the UPWP takes approximately 60 days after submitting it to the US Department of Transportation and Sandra Jackson from Federal Highway Administration. She thanked the board for convening in a virtual meeting to keep the approval of the UPWP on track. She moved on to recommend Resolution R10-2020 and R11-2020.

Mr. Snyder asked if the efforts to fund the consultant's contract to review the motor vehicle crash reports and make safety recommendations to the region were being carried forward to the FY 2021 UPWP.

Mr. Srikanth said that the consultant's work on the TPB safety study has funding in this fiscal year and most of the deliverables due this fiscal year are expected to be complete by June 30. He said that additional work activities have been added to the work program, so that the consultant can take a deeper dive into some of the results of the current analysis and consultant's contract has been extended into next fiscal year.

Mr. Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R10-2020 to approve the amendment to the FY 2020 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taveras and approved by the board.

Ms. Sebesky made a motion to adopt Resolution R11-2020 to approve the carryover funding to FY 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Angry and approved by the board.

8. APPROVAL OF THE FY 2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Ms. Erickson said that she would be recommending approval of R12-2020 for the approval of the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program. She said that no updates had been made to the draft that was presented to the board last month. She explained that the FY 2021 UPWP would become effective on July 1.

Ms. Newton made a motion to adopt R12-2020 to approve the FY 2021 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and approved by the board.

9. APPROVAL OF THE FY 2021 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM (CCWP)

Mr. Ramfos said that he would be recommending approval of R13-2020 for approval of the FY 2021 Commuter Connections Work Program. He said that there is an update to the draft which adds information about new orientation sessions for new Bike to Work Day pit stop managers working new and existing pit spots. He said that this year staff is expecting to have 120 pit stops, with 10 brand new stops, which would benefit from new pit stop managers. He moved on to recommend R13-2020.

Mr. Jordan made a motion to adopt R13-2020 to approve the FY 2021 CCWP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wojahn and adopted by the board.

10. REVIEW OF ALL COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND ACCEPTANCE OF RECOMMENDED RESPONSES FOR THE 2020 AMENDMENT TO VISUALIZE 2045, THE FY 2021-204 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), AND THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS

Ms. Posey reviewed the comments received during the comment period. The only comment submitted was a letter from the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. The letter acknowledged that the emissions estimates of the amended Visualize 2045 and the new TIP do meet the air quality requirements. Yet, the emissions amounts were above the Tier 1 mobile emissions budgets for some of the analysis years. MWAQC's comments also said that there is more the region could do to further reduce emissions to meet the newly enacted tougher (2015) ozone standards. MWAQC suggested further investment in transit and moving away from single occupancy vehicles.

Mr. Snyder asked if the TPB was agreeing or disagreeing with MWAQC.

Mr. Srikanth responded that the TPB does agree with MWAQC that one of the ways to improve air quality is to continue to increase investment in public transportation, ride-sharing, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. He said the response also noted why the emissions levels were above the Tier 1 mobile emissions budgets and that even at this level of emissions, the region would be able to maintain its attainment of the 2008 ozone standard.

Mr. Kannan said that he will be abstaining on the approval for air quality conformity analysis since he was not sure if conformity is being reached because of actual actions that this region is taking or because of essentially technicalities within the modeling and technical approach.

Mr. Srikanth responded that the conformity is being demonstrated based on all the projects and programs planned to be funded and implemented in Visualize 2045 plan and the TIP, on the forecasted land use changes anticipated to happen, and on federal laws impacting fuel and vehicle emissions. He said that there are changes in some technical data used for air quality calculations and these changes are why the estimated emissions are exceeding the Tier 1 levels of emissions budget. He said these changes were not related to transportation projects funded, implemented, and operated by transportation agencies, but rather the changes in the data were due to changes in the types of vehicles that had been purchased in recent years.

Mr. Mendelsohn asked for further clarification about MWAQC's concerns. He asked for an explanation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 budgets - what does it mean that MWAQC is expressing concern that TPB is having to use Tier 2 levels?

Mr. Srikanth explained that whenever motor vehicle emissions budgets are established, they are established with a set of inputs, transportation and non-transportation, that are current for that time. The budgets then remain fixed into the future. In subsequent years, when MPOs conduct conformity analysis, they have to use updated inputs, not just transportation projects but the non-transportation inputs such as fuel mix, vehicle fleet mix, environmental data such as humidity level, etc. which will change emission estimates. In order to accommodate the impact that those changes might have, EPA allows for building what they call a conformity buffer into the emissions budgets. So MWAQC said, we will establish Tier 1 budgets without any conformity buffer and then we will establish a second level of emissions budgets, called Tier 2, which will provide for some conformity buffer which can be used in case there are these kinds of technical updates. The TPB is now using this Tier 2 levels of emissions with the conformity buffer. MWAQC is noting this and encouraging TPB to support projects, programs and policies to stay within Tier 1 levels of emissions budget.

Mr. Mendelsohn asked why is MWAQC saying it will be a challenge to meet the 2015 ozone standard by its August 2021 deadline.

Mr. Srikanth said that the current emissions budgets TPB is working with are for the 2008 ozone standards established by the EPA. He said since then, EPA has promulgated a set of new and tougher standards in 2015. He said that there are currently no emissions budgets set of the tougher 2015 standards. Mr. Srikanth noted that MWAQC is telling the TPB that the 2015 standards, for which we don't yet have emissions budgets, are going to be tougher than 2008 and, therefore, transportation planning should continue to stay focused on reducing emissions even further and try to stay within Tier 1. He also said that the TPB had to use Tier 2 emissions budgets two years ago when Visualize 2045 was approved. At that time MWAQC had made a similar comment as well. He noted that there was no change in the primary reason, between 2018 and now, why emissions were above Tier 1 levels.

Mr. Mendelson asked if MWAQC was saying that the revised budgets that will be required to meet the 2015 standards will be lower than even the Tier 1? He said that if that was the case and we are about one ton above the current Tier 1, could it be that we would be multiple tons above the new budget if it is lower than Tier 1 levels?

Mr. Srikanth said that attaining the 2015 standards is going to be tougher for all sectors: for on-road transportation, non-road, power sector and area sector. In terms of the transportation emissions budgets, he said that this region has always provided a safety buffer for transportation. As such he expects when the 2015 budgets are developed there will be two tiers of budget yet again. He did note that these budgets could be less than these bars that are indicated on this chart and it is not known at this time. He added that the emissions levels in the region, particularly from the transportation sector, have been significantly reduced since 1995 and that transportation sector emissions are forecast to reduce significantly into the future. He explained that in spite of this progress, present emissions levels in the region are higher than the new and tougher 2015 ozone standard and that MWAQC was noting the challenge in meeting this new standard. He explained that reductions would be needed from all sectors, including transportation, to attain this tougher standard.

Mr. Mendelson asked for an explanation of an earlier comment on the change in vehicle standards. He asked if this changes was for better or worse?

Mr. Srikanth said that both aspects were reflected in the change. He explained that every three years, the TPB updates its fleet data and for the first time in 11 or so years, the fleet had gotten younger with newer vehicles and newer vehicles have lower emissions. He said that this gain from newer vehicles was however being offset by the higher percentage of light duty vehicles, such as SUVs, which have relatively higher emission than sedans. He also explained that heavy duty diesel vehicles contribute a disproportionate amount of emissions and as such, it is important that federal actions aimed at

automobile fuel and tailpipe emissions controls, for heavy duty vehicles, which produce the most reductions, are considered. He also said it was important not to roll back other rules currently in place.

Ms. Kostiuk asked if this was the first time that emissions analysis for Visualize 2045 was being made available?

Mr. Srikanth said no, emissions analysis for Visualize 2045 was made available back in 2018 when the Plan was adopted. Since the plan is now being amended, the emissions analysis has been revised. He added that there was very little to no change in emissions levels itself with this amendment.

Ms. Kostiuk also noted that she had similar concerns with regard to ensuring that the TPB is meeting the stricter budgets and that it will meet them in the future.

Mr. Stephens asked if the Tier 2 buffers will prevent the region from meeting the 2015 attainment levels.

Mr. Srikanth explained that MWAQC works with all four sectors to estimate emissions levels from all sectors to determine what those levels will be with regard to the 2015 standards. He explained that the region has been able to meet every new standard since 1992. He also explained that today the region is just barely exceeding the 2015 standards. He said that he believes the prospects are good that there will be continued improvement in air quality in the future and the region will have to work on it and cannot take it for granted.

Mr. Snyder asked if there is a process in place to improve in the future.

Mr. Srikanth explained that when the aspirational initiatives were approved, emissions were one factor that was taken into consideration so those projects, programs, and policies should help reduce emissions.

Mr. Mendelson moved for a friendly amendment to change the comment response at the third line from the bottom, the second to the last sentence. In this sentence, he suggested changing the word "continued" to "greater," so it says "The TPB agrees that there should be a greater effort to reduce emissions across all sectors." He also asked that the next sentence be changed so it says that the TPB agrees with MWAQC on the need to invest in public transit, ride-sharing, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and other programs to reduce emissions.

Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to amend.

The board accepted the recommended response, as amended, to comments received for the 2020 Amendment to Visualize 2045, the FY 2021-2024 TIP, and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis

11. APPROVAL OF THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS OF THE 2020 AMENDMENT TO VISUALIZE 2045 AND THE FY 2021-2024 TIP

Ms. Hamilton made a motion to adopt Resolution R14-2020 for approval of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2020 Amendment to Visualize and the FY 2021-2024 TIP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Kannan said that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority would be abstaining from the vote.

R14-2020 was passed by the board with one abstention.

12. APPROVAL OF THE 2020 AMENDMENT TO VISUALIZE 2045 AND THE FY 2021-2024 TIP

Ms. Erickson recommended approval of R15-2020.

Ms. Kostiuk said that she would be voting against this resolution because of her ongoing concerns of the inclusion of the Maryland traffic relief program in the TIP and her view that the region should be focusing more on transit rather than on highways.

Mr. Wojahn from College park said that he would be voting against the resolution for the same reasons expressed by Ms. Kostiuk.

Ms. Umstattd made a motion to adopt R15-2020 to approve the 2020 Amendment to Visualize 2045 and the FY 2021-2024 TIP. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hamilton.

The resolution was adopted by the board with three opposed votes from Maryland: Ms. Kostiuk, Mr. Wojahn, and Mr. Jordan.

13. CERTIFICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Ms. Erickson said that every time the TIP is updated the TPB is required to look at every federal law that defines how the TPB spends federal funding in the metropolitan transportation planning process. She said that the MPO needs to provide a statement of certification to show that it is following the federal laws and process on spending federal money. She referred the board to a document that explains how staff and the board implement and work on these federal actions. She said last year the TPB passed its review. She moved on to recommend R16-2020 for approval to certify that the TPB is following the metropolitan transportation planning process and authorizes the chair to sign the statement.

Mr. Srikanth said that the state department of transportations have reviewed the process and have indicated that they will provide their signed certification letters.

Mr. Dorsey made a motion to adopt R16-2020 endorsing the appended Statement of Certification. The motion was seconded by Ms. Umstattd and R16-2020 was adopted by the board.

INFORMATION ITEMS

14. TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES: HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT ON AREA INTERACTIVE MAP

Chair Russel said that the presentation on the interactive map for transit-oriented communities has been deferred to a future meeting.

15. PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO TPB BYLAWS

Mr. Srikanth referred to his memo to the board that proposed adding language to the TPB Bylaws that would provide the TPB chair and the two vice-chairs the ability to convene a board meeting virtually. He said that this memo was posted to the website and includes extracts from the current TPB Bylaws document. Section 4 of the Bylaws talks about the time and place of meetings for the TPB. He said the proposal is to add Subsection (c).

Mr. Srikanth said that Subsection (c) says:

“Meetings may be held by telephone conference call, video conference call, or online combination, upon the direction of the chairperson or vice-chairperson if the chairperson is not available, after consultation

with the vice-chairperson if possible, and the director of the Transportation Planning Board.

“if possible, three days’ notice shall be given to the members by either email or telephone, which notice shall include the specific steps necessary to access the meeting. Such direction shall only be given upon a determination that a face-to-face meeting is effectively precluded by emergency conditions affecting public safety, travel, or other considerations.

“Insofar as possible, all matters requiring a vote shall be proposed in writing and furnished to members at least three days prior to the meeting.”

Mr. Srikanth said that the proposed update to the bylaws would provide appropriate reference to this new section when referring to meetings. He said that this presentation is adequate notice to the board about the amendment to the bylaws. TPB staff will review any comments received on these changes and discuss the text of those changes at the next meeting.

Mr. Mendelson suggested some changes. He requested that “public health” be added to say, “conditions affecting public safety or public health.” He suggested removing “travel” and “other considerations.”

Mr. Srikanth said that “travel” was added because sometimes roads in the region can be unpassable in the winter.

Mr. Snyder asked if the proposed changes will be cleared with legal counsel for the DOTs.

Mr. Srikanth said that the language was provided by the TPB’s legal counsel and that it will be shared with DOT legal staffs over the next month.

OTHER ITEMS

16. ADJOURN

No other business was brought before the board. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.