



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erikson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Summary of Public Comment for the March TPB Meeting
DATE: March 17, 2021

For the March TPB meeting, the board received 16 comments. TPB staff has consolidated all of the comments that came via email into this memo. There are also 3 letters that are attached at the end of this memo. This document will be available to the public and all members of the board at the meeting's event page on the TPB website.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED

Monica O'Connor

Create a plan that will meet the carbon neutral targets asap:

The climate crisis is at a pivotal juncture. All the decisions we make today have grave consequences. It's time to be as bold as we are able.

There is no doubt that we can waste no time reaching carbon neutrality - we have lost the opportunity to work toward any measure less than robust. To do this we must reduce driving and its associated green house gas emissions. We need a plan that allows for walkable, bikeable transit-oriented communities. Never ending highway and arterial expansion will only cause us to fall begins our goals.

You must ensure that the draft project list to be adopted this spring will reduce VMT and GHG emissions enough to reach our 2030 climate goals.

Monica O'Connor
WISE

Brian O'Malley

Dear Transportation Planning Board,
As you finalize the draft 2050 Transportation Plan for the greater Washington region I want to urge you to seriously, measurably set a path to achieve the Greenhouse Gas reductions, land use, equity, and housing goals that COG has developed. Now is the time to act. The Vision 2045 plan did not put the region on a course to reduce on-road GHG emissions by enough. Under that plan the region will not achieve its adopted 2030 climate target nor achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The Voices of the Region Survey and polling in Maryland show strong support for transportation that reduces climate emissions. We have already passed the time to be serious and direct about addressing the

climate crisis and too many people will pay the price with their property, health and lives if we do not begin immediately. A plan that sets the path for where we need to be is the necessary first step.

Ken Notis

Climate change is a crisis facing our planet, which we can act on here in our region, through our transportation choices

The Voices of the Region survey results showed overwhelming support for transportation that reduces climate emissions.

It also showed support for the COG housing goals.

The plan must reflect not only current conditions, but expected increases in TOD and close in housing that will increase demand for transit.

The previous Visualize 2045 plan achieved only a 23 percent reduction in on-road greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 compared to 2005 levels.

This current updated plan has to be different if the region is going to meet its adopted 2030 climate target and reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

TPB can't wait another four years to address the climate crisis when we can make changes now.

We at Liveable Alexandria ask that TPB Board members select projects for public comment that reduce vehicle miles travel and greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to meet our climate targets and support COG's equity and land use goals.

Ken Notis
Chair
Liveable Alexandria

Jonathan Krall
Member, Steering Committee, Grassroots Alexandria

Dear National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board,

We at Grassroots Alexandria take climate change seriously and keep repeating the message that we need a crash program to build wind, solar, and subways. By "take climate change seriously" we mean that we don't want to see our grandchildren die in a food riot, a war, or some other disaster caused by climate-driven global political instability and/or food system collapse. As a matter of public safety, we ask that you take this seriously as well.

We understand that you have multiple transportation and land use policy options within your control that could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in your current update of the long-range transportation plan. Please do your part by erring on the side of doing too much instead of doing too little.

Glen Besa

Visualize 2045 Plan - Reducing GHGs and VMTs is critical

TO: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT JURISDICTIONAL
MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

It is critical that all our planning efforts seriously address climate change. With mobile sources being the largest contributor to GHG emissions in metro Washington, the TPB must infuse the Visualize 2045 plan with meaningful measures to significantly reduce GHGs including measures to reduce vehicle miles travelled. Not only is this the right thing to do, it is clearly a priority of the Biden Administration. A serious effort at reducing GHGs could eventually make metro Washington eligible for more infrastructure funding from the federal government.

With the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warning us that we need to reduce our GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, the TPB needs to be a leader in innovative transportation measures to address this climate emergency.

Elle De La Cancela

To the Board:

My name is Elle De La Cancela and I am writing to you on behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a regional organization in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area that is dedicated to fighting climate change on both grassroots and state policy levels. I wanted to let you know that we laud the decision to invest in programs and studies that aim to reduce overall vehicle miles travelled. The reduction in VMT is a benefit to both the environment, in a lowering of overall greenhouse gas emissions, and to our most vulnerable people, in that alternative transportation to personal vehicles provides more equitable access to mobility. I urge you to consider this commitment when developing the spring draft plan for Visual 2045, as well as including the priorities from the Voices of the Region survey and the COG housing goals. Transit oriented development and a focus on bike/walk infrastructure is the only way to ensure a safe, thriving, and livable future for all people. We must act boldly and quickly in order to reach 2030 climate goals and net carbon neutrality by 2050. We have no time to waste -- please consider these in your draft before it is released for public comment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Elle De La Cancela

Monica O'Connor

Cecilia Plante

Maryland Legislation Coalition

Maryland is already paying dearly for the climate crisis. It's in our power to take actions today that will mitigate some of the worst effects of climate change. The biggest emission of GHG is our transportation sector - therefore, expansions of highways adds gas to the fire.

What we need is investments in walkable cities, bikeable communities and reliable, affordable, accessible transit. Do not make the mistake in thinking that highway expansion in any way helps us deal with the crisis at hand. Make a plan to realistically meet our climate targets by 2030.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Plante
Monica O'Connor
Maryland Legislative Coalition

David Foster
RAIL Solution, Chairman

Electric vehicle proponents are well-intentioned but continually overlook railroad electrification, which is standard, off-the-shelf technology world-wide except in North America, where it is limited to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. It makes no sense to plow billions of dollars into researching and equipping delivery vans, trash trucks, and school buses, which all drive limited miles and hours, while ignoring the tens of thousands of miles operated and thousands of locomotives out there every day on the railroads.

If the US is to get serious in addressing emissions from the transportation sector, we need as much surface freight moving by rail as possible, already almost four times more fuel efficient than over-the-road trucking. Electrification of railroad mainlines can double this advantage, curtailing greenhouse gas pollution and impact on climate change.

Paula Posas
Sierra Club

Dear MWCOG,
I am concerned about climate change and the urgent need to act. We need reduced driving and emissions, and walkable, bikeable transit-oriented communities. Please shape your update of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) according to the TPB's current greenhouse gas study, the Voices of the Region survey results (which showed overwhelming support for transportation that reduces climate emissions), and the COG housing goals. Opt for the transportation and land use policy options within your control that could significantly reduce GHG emissions in this current update of the LRTP. We need more transit. The supersizing of highways and arterial expansion is not appropriate to the needs of today ... or tomorrow. Please ensure that the draft project list to be adopted this spring will reduce VMT and GHG emissions enough to reach 2030 climate goals and support COG's equity and land use goals. And not just by using weaker accounting methods!

MWCOG already committed to this in an admirable December 2020 vote - please let it guide you.

requiring that members "prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals."

Many thanks and best wishes,
Paula

Brian Ditzler
Maryland Sierra Club Chair Emeritus
Chapter Transportation Chair

Climate change is happening now, so it's imperative that the update to the Visualize 2045 plan now being written focus on projects, programs and policies that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The TPB Board endorsed this approach in December, which means it should be a top priority now, and not when another plan is written in 4 or 5 years.

Transportation is now the primary contributor to climate-damaging GHG emissions in this region and nationwide. Steps needed to address this problem include having more walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented communities, reducing the need to drive, and having more reliable, fast and frequent mass transit. Highway expansion must be curtailed because it attracts more drivers, increases GHG and toxic tailpipe emissions from the increased number of vehicles, and encourages more sprawl. Each of these changes is important and can make a real difference.

Please ensure the draft project list to be adopted this spring will reduce VMT and GHG enough so our region can meet its 2030 climate goals, and get us ready to reach our 2050 goal of carbon neutrality.

Charles Grymes
Mobility Chair, Prince William Conservation Alliance

"Business as Usual" will not result in meeting the goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% of the 2005 levels in 2030.

The greatest single source of greenhouse gas emissions is the transportation sector. Electric Vehicles will not replace gas-fueled vehicles by 2030, so we need to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in order to reduce emissions.

Paving more lane-miles so cars can go faster just worsens, rather than solves, the climate change problem. We need to invest in trails, and to apply smart transportation and land use planning to reduce VMT. "Business As Usual" planning and road projects won't solve the problem.

We need to plan for mobility beyond just car travel. We need to plan for walkable communities where bike/pedestrian connectivity offers a more-attractive way to get around than a single-occupancy vehicle trip. We need to plan for the coming explosion of electric bike use, with Safe Routes to School, parks, libraries, retail centers, and jobs.

We need to plan for affordable transportation in places where we choose to increase affordable housing, so every worker in a family does not have to buy a car to drive to the jobsite. That will enhance the development of diverse communities with greater equity.

Caitlin Rogger
Interim Executive Director
Greater Greater Washington

Dear Transportation Planning Board,

I am writing on behalf of Greater Greater Washington to express our strong support for a regional transportation plan that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

We applaud the TPB Board's vote in December 2020 to require that members "prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals."

The draft plan should be shaped by the TPB's current greenhouse gas study, the Voices of the Region survey results (which showed overwhelming support for transportation that reduces climate emissions), as well as the COG housing goals.

The previous Visualize 2045 plan achieved only a 23 percent reduction in on-road greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 compared to 2005 levels. This current updated plan has to be different if the region is going to meet its adopted 2030 climate target and reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Phase 1 climate findings being presented by staff today demonstrate that you have multiple transportation and land use policy options within your control that could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this current update of the long-range transportation plan.

TPB can't continually wait another four years to address the climate crisis when we can make changes now.

We ask that TPB Board members select projects for public comment that reduce vehicle miles travel and greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to meet our climate targets and support COG's equity and land use goals.

Chris Leyen

Senior Policy Manager

Virginia League of Conservation Voters

We applaud the TPB Board's vote in December 2020 to require that members "prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals."

However, TPB staff have been saying that the draft plan to be approved in June for modeling is not being shaped by the TPB's current greenhouse gas study, the Voices of the Region survey results (which showed overwhelming support for transportation that reduces climate emissions), or the COG housing goals.

The previous Visualize 2045 plan achieved only a 23 percent reduction in on-road greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 compared to 2005 levels. This current updated plan has to be different if the region is going to meet its adopted 2030 climate target and reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

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March 16, 2021

Hon. Charles Allen
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Re: **Visualize 2045 conformity inputs must reflect TPB Board commitment to prioritize projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions**

Chair Allen and Board members:

The Coalition for Smarter Growth applauds the TPB Board's vote to **require** that members "*prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals.*"

We hope to see draft conformity inputs on April 2 that reflect your commitment. This means there must be significant changes from the 2018 adopted plan.

However, TPB staff comments are of great concern to us and suggest that the plan being drafted will not make significant changes reflecting the COG climate plan, COG's adopted housing goals, or the important findings from the Voices of the Region travel survey:

- At the CAC meeting last week, TPB staff said that the Voices of the Region survey won't shape the projects in the current plan update.
 - This survey showed climate was a far greater concern than congestion; that people will telecommute, walk and bike more and would like to drive less; and that growing transit ridership requires placing a priority on both frequency and cleanliness.
- Director Srikanth plans to release the Climate Change Study results at the end of the Visualize 2045 process with the air conformity results, making it too late to shape the plan.
- COG staff are not providing any land use scenario that reflects the housing targets for focusing 75% of new housing in transit-accessible activity centers.

TPB can't continually wait another four years to address the climate crisis and pressing equity concerns when it already knows what needs to be done. We hope the draft conformity inputs reflect our region's policy commitments.

Regards,

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director

Bill Pugh
Senior Policy Fellow



WABA
WASHINGTON AREA
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

March 17, 2021

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Dear Chair Allen,

Washington Area Bicyclist Association and our 5,000 members applaud the TPB Board's vote in December 2020 to **require** that members "prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals." We are deeply concerned about climate change and the urgent need to act, and we know that investing in walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented communities will make a real difference. We ask that TPB Board members select projects for public comment that reduce vehicle miles travel and greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to meet our climate targets and support COG's equity and land use goals.

The region's update to the long-range transportation plan ("Visualize 2045") is approaching a critical point, and we are concerned that the current plan will be little different than the 2018 plan. The previous Visualize 2045 plan achieved only a 23 percent reduction in on-road greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 compared to 2005 levels. This current updated plan has to be different if the region is going to meet its adopted 2030 climate target and reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jeremiah Lowery
Advocacy Director
Washington Area Bicyclist Association



March 16, 2021

To the Members of the Transportation Planning Board:

This comment is submitted on behalf of Ward3Vision, a Washington, DC, grass-roots advocacy group for smart growth. We support programs and projects that help our D.C. neighborhoods to be environmentally and socially responsible, including fostering walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented infrastructure and development.

In line with our mission, we are very concerned about the urgent need to combat climate change and greatly reduce the amount of driving and associated pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. We urge you to ensure that the regional transportation plan being considered in June 2021 and the draft project list for this spring be more aggressive in fighting greenhouse emissions, promoting non-vehicle transportation, and designing walkable/bikeable communities in order to reach the 2030 climate target and reach carbon neutrality by 2050. We strongly support projects that focus investment in new jobs and housing in transit accessible areas.

This is a matter of urgency, and if the Board misses this opportunity, it will have to wait several years. Due to the immanent crisis of global warming, postponing action is unacceptable.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Susan Kimmel, Chair
Ward3Vision Steering Committee

Cc: Mary Cheh, Councilperson, Ward 3