



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Public Comment for the September 2024 TPB Meeting
DATE: October 16, 2024

The Transportation Planning Board accepts public comment on a rolling basis. Comments can be submitted via email (tpbcomment@mwkog.org), online (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 September 17 and noon Tuesday October 15 the TPB received three letters and one comment submitted via email.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

George “Tad” Aburn- Comments via Letter- September 23, 2024

Mr. Aburn provided a copy of the letter he submitted to the Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC). The letter emphasizes the urgent need for CEEPC to provide strong advice to COG and the TPB on updating climate goals. The author criticizes CEEPC for not allowing public comments on the climate crisis issue during their meetings, suggesting that public input could have pushed for quicker action. He describes the current climate goals as outdated and insufficient. The letter urges CEEPC to adopt more aggressive targets similar to those of Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. The letter requests that CEEPC amend its agenda to prioritize defining a process for making formal recommendations to MWCOG and TPB, highlighting the urgency of addressing climate change.

Virginia Delegate Mark Sickles- Comments via Letter- September 26, 2023

Delegate Sickles writes that his legislative district runs along I-495/95 from the Springfield Interchange to Richmond Highway. He references the project underway to develop congestion remedies for this section, writing that the Transportation Planning Board’s recent vote to include the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis is a crucial step to complete the environmental analysis and will help make informed decisions to reduce congestion. He writes that the existing Woodrow Wilson Bridge was designed to accommodate future transit, including heavy rail, and VDOT’s letter ensures that all study concepts incorporate rail preservation or include a commitment to convert future space. He states the existing Express Lanes support efficient bus service and carpooling and continued studies are essential to enhance multimodal mobility and reduce congestion. He writes that if the Air Quality Conformity Analysis is favorable, he is hopeful that the project will advance with the goal to reduce congestion, improve travel reliability, and provide more travel choices along I-95/495.

George “Tad” Aburn- Comments via Letter- October 15, 2024

Mr. Aburn writes that during agenda item # 8, the TPB will receive a briefing on the final report on implementation considerations for the on-road transportation greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. He writes that the strategy appears to be reasonable, but lags the strategies being adopted and implemented by some of the TPB members. He states that the TPB should require that the report include language stipulating that the TPB does not condone or support any form of implementation of the on-road GHG reduction strategy that will create environmental justice problems or high-risk air pollution hotspots in communities of color, and he says that the TPB should recognize that the MWCOG Board is considering more stringent regional climate change goals.

Bill Pugh-Comment via Email- October 15, 2024

Mr. Pugh writes that #8 on the agenda is a critical item. He writes that the Board adopted a set of greenhouse gas reduction strategies over two years ago, and since then, TPB members have only advanced 2 of the 14. He states that the Coalition for Smarter Growth are disappointed that it has taken staff over two years to get this literature review to the board. He writes that the Visualize 2050 process has lacked accountability in reducing global warming pollution despite the 2021 board resolution to do so, and asks the Board to move forward promising greenhouse gas strategies that effectively address regional goals. A number of strategies are listed in the email.

Laura Bachle

From: George Aburn <tadaburn@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2024 7:58 AM
To: Ivey, Jolene; Takis Karantonis; Jeffrey King; MWAQCPublic Comment
Cc: callen@dccouncil.gov; chenderson@dccouncil.gov; Kenny Boddye; tedernoga@co.pg.md.us; Anita Bonds; dsnyder@fallschurchva.gov; Julie Kimmel; William Washburn; James Wang; HERBERT SIMMENS; Dshprentz@gmail.com; Marshall, Karim (he/him/his); pmmecca@gmail.com; Mark Rodeffer; anne@chesapeakeclimate.org; Chris Hoagland -MDE-; mark.stewart1@maryland.gov; TPBcomment
Subject: The Climate Crisis - Need for CEEPC Action at 9/25/24 CEEPC Meeting
Attachments: CEEPC Letter 092522024 Urgency ACPAC Rec.pdf

Chair Ivey ... Thank you again for allowing written comments as part of CEEPC meetings.

I have attached a comment letter to you and the full CEEPC membership on the urgent need for CEEPC to act on the climate crisis by responding quickly to the May recommendation from ACPAC on the climate change crisis and the need for updated, scientifically based climate change goals.

The letter asks you to amend the CEEPC agenda at the beginning of your September 25, 2024 meeting and to set up a Chair requested process to finalize a response to ACPAC over the next few weeks.

Thank you again for the work you do ... it is critically important.

Tad

Tad Aburn, Retired MDE Air Director, Volunteer for communities in MD and DC

Tad Aburn
39724 East Sun Drive, Unit 213
Fenwick Island, DE 19944
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(443) 829-3652

September 23, 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

Re: The Climate Change Crisis - Need for CEEPC to Act on 9/25

Chair Ivey, Past-Chair Karantonis and CEEPC members:

I am writing to urge you to immediately forward strong advice to both the MWCOG Board and the TPB on the need for a significant increase in the level of effort at MWCOG and TPB to address the climate crisis and to immediately update the region's old and now inadequate climate change goals.

MWCOG staff has explained to me that CEEPC is not really an MWCOG policy committee as only the Board, MWAQC and TPB have policy making authority. CEEPC is however expected to provide critical policy advice to the three policy making bodies. There has never been a more important issue for CEEPC to provide advice on than the climate crisis issues spelled out very well in the May 20, 2024 ACPAC recommendation to CEEPC.

MWCOG staff has also explained to me that CEEPC does not routinely allow for public comment, like MWAQC and TPB do, as again, CEEPC is not a committee with policy making authority. The CEEPC Chair however can allow public comment. If you would have allowed public comment on the climate crisis issue during your September 25, 2024 meeting, and advertised that opportunity, I believe you would have received thousands of comments pushing CEEPC to act and to act quickly.

I find it discouraging that your agenda does not include an action to forward any kind of recommendation or advice to the MWCOG policy bodies after having had the ACPAC recommendations for over 4 months. The agenda only includes a short 15 minute item to, once again, discuss the ACPAC recommendation. CEEPC does not meet again until the end of November.

At your last meeting you had a very, very scary briefing from Sunny Wescott, the Chief Meteorologist at the Department of Homeland Security on the potentially devastating climate change impacts in the MWCOG region. This presentation was from a national expert, very scary and highlighted the “urgency” issue in the ACPAC recommendation. Chair Ivey commented on how scary and alarming this presentation was.

I urge you to amend your agenda for Wednesday at the beginning of the meeting. Most of the meeting, if not the full meeting, should be dedicated to defining a process that will get a formal recommendation from CEEPC to the MWCOG Board and TPB as quickly as possible. The Chair has the authority to do this. You can also set up a process to have special sessions with CEEPC to finalize the CEEPC recommendations over the next few weeks. See my July 24, 2024 email that is appended below.

It is critical for CEEPC to provide advice to both the COG Board and to TPB. The need for CEEPC to provide advice to TPB is urgent. TPB is updating the region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction plan for the transportation sector right now. They are using the older, now outdated and inadequate MWCOG climate change goals to guide their work. The MWCOG TPB GHG emission reduction effort is mediocre at best. This is unusual as TPB is recognized nationally as a progressive, innovative transportation planning group.

Because the TPB GHG plan is based upon weak goals, difficult but critical emission reduction approaches are not being included. The TPB plan is appropriately heavy on electrification and other technology based emission reduction approaches but noticeably weak on strategies to address reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), other Travel Demand Management (TDM) concepts and transportation driven sequestration initiatives.

The goals recommended by ACPAC (something similar to the Montgomery County goals of 100% reduction by 2025 with an 80% reduction by 2027) would clearly drive consideration of more VMT and TDM strategies and increased attention to sequestration as part of the TPB GHG emission reduction plan. The State of Maryland has similar, if not tougher, goals to those in Montgomery County. Why is CEEPC not asking its own members to brief the committee on why they have established climate

change goals that are much, much more aggressive than the goals currently adopted regionally by MWCOG?

MWAQC also received a recommendation from ACPAC on May 20th. They plan to finalize a response to that recommendation during their meeting just after the CEEPC meeting on the 25th. A group of strong leaders at MWAQC has, over the past 2 months, pushed very hard for action on a similarly critical issue ... environmental justice. Because of the efforts of the MWAQC leadership and the three Co-Chairs of the MWAQC Environmental Justice Subcommittee the MWAQC process to adopt a strong, action oriented EJ Action Plan, that builds from very significant public input, is moving forward at a remarkable pace to allow MWAQC to adopt this plan within the next six months. The leadership at MWAQC should be commended.

I do acknowledge that you already have arranged for several very interesting briefings on the 25th, but there is nothing on the agenda that is anywhere near as important as the need for CEEPC to forward a strong, science-based recommendation on the climate crisis to the three MWCOG policy committees. I'm certain the proposed speakers would defer their presentations to a future CEEPC meeting to allow for this critical policy discussion.

In closing, I have great respect for the commitment to climate change that almost all of the CEEPC members have demonstrated. I again urge you to adjust your agenda for next Wednesday to set up a process with a hard deadline of getting CEEPC recommendations or guidance to both the MWCOG Board and to the TPB within the next several weeks.

Thank you again for allowing public input. I would be happy to discuss these comments at your convenience.

George S. Aburn Jr

Tad Aburn
tadaburn@gmail.com
(443) 829-3652

cc :

Charles Allen, Chair, MWCOG BOD
Christina Henderson, Chair, MWCOG TPB
Kenny Boddye, Chair, MWAQC

Anita Bonds, Vice-Chair, MWAQC
Tom Dernoga, Vice Chair, MWAQC
David Snyder, Vice Chair, MWAQC
Julie Kimmel, Chair ACPAC
William Washburn, Vice-Chair ACPAC
ACPAC Recommendation Sub-Committee
Chris Hoagland, MDE

July 24, 2024 Email Comments

Additional CEEPC Meetings Before Late September

Inbox

Search for all messages with label Inbox

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Wed, Jul 24,
11:52 AM



George Aburn

<tadaburn@gmail.com>

to Jolene, Takis,
MWAQCPublic, Kenny,
tedernoga@co.pg.md.
us, Julie, James,
William, HERBERT,
pmmecca, Dshprentz,
Mark, bcc: me 

Chairwoman Ivey - Thank you for your efforts today to push the ACPAC recommendations.

Your comment on how scary the presentation from Sunny Wescott was ... was very accurate. The two presentations that followed Sunny's presentation were equally scary.

I know you see the disconnect between her very alarming presentation and the potential 6 month (or longer) delay in addressing the call for urgent action from ACPAC. The ACPAC call for urgent action and stronger goals is specifically designed to try and avoid some of the most horrific potential consequences of climate change. Again, the ACPAC recommendation was unanimously supported and submitted to CEEPC before your May 2024 meeting.

I urge you to follow the lead of MWAQC Chair Boddye who has set up a process where a group of MWAQC members are meeting three times between May and late September (both CEEPC and MWAQC meet next in late September) to address an urgent issue that is on the MWAQC priority list ... environmental justice. As CEEPC Chair you do have this authority.

You may also want to allow some of the ACPAC experts that helped write the ACPAC recommendations and stakeholder experts to participate in the interim meetings designed to support a strong final recommendation from CEEPC at your September meeting.

If there is anything that I can do to help ... just ask.

The climate crisis is very real and as ACPAC Chair Kimmel said during her update at today's meeting ... Every single day of delay matters.

Tad

Tad Aburn

Retired MDE Air Director

Volunteer for multiple communities in MD and DC

tadaburn@gmail.com

(443) 829-3652


Laura Bachle

From: Kanti Srikanth
Sent: Friday, October 4, 2024 2:49 PM
To: Andrew Millin
Cc: Lyn Erickson
Subject: RE: Del. Sickles Letter on 495 Study



Goo afternoon, Andrew!


Thank you kindly for sharing the Delegate's thoughts and comments on the project with the TPB. We will ensure that this is shared with the entire board at its monthly meeting on the 16th of this month. As always, please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss this or any other PTB matter further with me.


Best regards
Kanti




Kanti Srikanth
Executive Director, TPB
Deputy Executive Director, COG
Department of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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Washington, DC 20002

 Visit our website



[SAVE CONTACT](#)

From: Andrew Millin <andrew@marksickles.com>
Sent: Friday, October 4, 2024 2:42 PM
To: Kanti Srikanth <ksrikanth@mwkog.org>
Subject: Del. Sickles Letter on 495 Study

Hi Mr. Srikanth,

Attached is a letter from Delegate Mark Sickles regarding the ongoing VDOT study into the 495 Southside Corridor Express Lane project. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best,
Andrew

--

Andrew Millin
Chief of Staff, Delegate Mark Sickles (HD-17)

Richmond Phone: 804-698-1043

District Phone: 703-922-6440

Cell Phone: 781-771-3981



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

MARK D. SICKLES

POST OFFICE BOX 10628
FRANCONIA, VIRGINIA 22310

SEVENTEENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
APPROPRIATIONS, VICE-CHAIR
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
RULES

September 26, 2024

Mr. Kanathur Srikanth
Deputy Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning
MWCOG Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Srikanth,

My legislative district runs along I-495/95 from the Springfield Interchange to Richmond Highway, essentially the entire length of I-495 without managed lanes in Virginia. I am thankful that a study is underway, and that congestion remedies for this section are being developed. During rush hour, I can tell how bad interstate traffic is when I try to pull out onto Franconia Road, a WAZE alternative for drivers seeking a road that moves.

Last month's vote by the Transportation Planning Board to include the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis was an important step necessary to complete the environmental analysis. The Board can now make an informed decision on how to reduce congestion across our region, including along this vital corridor. Every day, over 200,000 travelers cross the Woodrow Wilson Bridge between Maryland and Virginia, linking our economies and regional transportation system. Road conditions characterized by heavy congestion along I-495 is a major concern for people trying to go home in South Fairfax County.

As is well known by every interested person by now, the existing bridge was designed to accommodate additional space for future transit, including heavy rail. It is critically important for any improvements in the 495 Southside Corridor to not preclude future transit, especially rail, across the bridge. Therefore, I was pleased by VDOT's letter dated April 30, 2024, ensuring that all the concepts included in the study incorporate rail preservation by retaining existing unoccupied space, or by incorporating a commitment to convert necessary space in the future. Some day, WMATA and the region may be positioned to implement rail service along this corridor and it will be at no cost to WMATA, according to VDOT. Regarding transit investments generally, I greatly appreciate that the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's I-495 Southside Capital Beltway Transit and Transportation Demand Management Study is being used by the project study team.

In fact, we need more transit as soon as possible. The existing Express Lanes facilitate safe, efficient and reliable bus service today while incentivizing commuter ride sharing. There are over 1,200 weekday bus trips and over 11,000 carpool (HOV3+) trips daily across the Express Lanes network on 495, 95 and 395.

It is imperative that we continue to allow studies to enhance multimodal mobility and to reduce congestion. If the Air Quality Conformity Analysis is satisfactory or is beneficial to air quality, I trust the Transportation Planning Board will advance this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together to reduce congestion, improve travel reliability and provide additional travel choices to our constituents along I-95/495.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark D. Sickles".

Mark D. Sickles
Delegate, 17th House District

cc: Sheppard Miller, Virginia Secretary of Transportation
Stephen Brich, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation
Bill Cuttler, Northern Virginia District Engineer, VDOT
Members, Alexandria City Mayor; Council, State Senators and Delegates
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, State Senators and Delegates
Virginia Members, Transportation Planning Board
Arlington County (Greg Emanuel)
Fairfax County (Gregg Steverson)
Prince William County (Rick Canizales)
Loudoun County (Nancy Boyd)
City of Falls Church (Zak Bradley)
City of Fairfax (Wendy Sanford)
City of Alexandria (Adriana Casteneda)
City of Manassas Park (Patricia Hurley-Ritenour)
City of Manassas (Steve Burke)

Laura Bachle

From: George Aburn <tadaburn@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 11:51 AM
To: TPBcomment; Lyn Erickson
Cc: chenderson@dccouncil.gov; Kenny Boddy; tedernoga@co.pg.md.us; Julie Kimmel; Ivey, Jolene; Jeffrey King; William Washburn; callen@dccouncil.gov; councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov; Darden, Wesley
Subject: Item 1 Virtual Comment Opportunity
Attachments: TPB 10172024 Final Written TPB Comment.pdf

Lyn - Please register me to provide virtual comments during the October 16, 2024 TPB meeting. I will not be attending the meeting to provide in-person comments.

My comments are attached.

If you could please confirm receipt, and provide a response consistent with the TPB Public Participation Plan and guidance, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again for your help.

Tad Aburn

(443) 829-3652

Comments for the October 16, 2024 TPB Meeting

Tad Aburn¹

tadaburn@gmail.com

(443) 829-3652

Madame Chair, TPB members ... Thank you for the opportunity to provide virtual public comment today.

Could you please use the language below (bold Italics) in the MWCOG staff summary of my comments:

“During agenda item # 8, you will be receiving a briefing on the final report on implementation considerations for the on-road transportation greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. This will be an informational item, not an action item. The strategy appears to be reasonable, but it lags far behind the strategies being adopted and implemented by numerous TPB members.

TPB should require that the report include language similar to the language below as part of that strategy.

- 1. “TPB does not condone or support any form of implementation of the on-road GHG reduction strategy that will create, or make worse, environmental justice problems or high-risk air pollution hotspots in communities of color.”***
- 2. “TPB recognizes that the MWCOG Board is considering much more stringent, regional climate change goals. TPB has built the on-road GHG reduction strategy with this in mind and plans to quickly revise the strategy should stronger climate change goals be adopted by the Board.***

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to provide public comment.

¹ As background, my name is Tad Aburn. I have submitted comments on this issue at every TPB meeting since November of 2022. I am retired, was a Maryland resident for 68 years and I am now doing volunteer work for overburdened communities in Prince George’s County and the District of Columbia. I am also a member of the DC EJ Coalition. In 2022, I was the Chair of MWAQC TAC. I was an MWAQC member for over 10 years. For almost 20 years I was the Director of the air pollution program in Maryland. I worked for MDE for 40 years.

In closing, I would like to request the courtesy of a response that explains how TPB will consider these comments.² I would also like to again request that TPB Tech and MWAQC TAC be asked by the TPB and the MWCOG Board to evaluate the comprehensive set of data, research and analyses on the issue of transportation driven air pollution hot-spots in communities of color that is now available.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to provide public comment. I would be happy to discuss these comments with you.

² The TPB federally approved public participation plan says: “The TPB will give thoughtful consideration to how public input might affect its decisions and how input might improve TPB plans and products. The TPB will acknowledge the comments that were received **and how they were considered.**”

Laura Bachle

From: Bill Pugh <bill@smartergrowth.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 11:59 AM
To: TPBcomment
Cc: Stewart Schwartz
Subject: Item 1 Virtual Comment Opportunity

Dear TPB staff,

Please read this comment to the TPB board at its October 16 meeting:

Chair Henderson and TPB board members,

- #8 on your agenda today, Implementation Considerations for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies, is a critical item. The consultant and staff have done a valuable analysis.
- The Board adopted a set of greenhouse gas reduction strategies over two years ago. Since then, TPB has only advanced 2 of the 14, just those related to Electric Vehicles.
- We are disappointed that it has taken staff over two years to get this literature review to the board – and with no next steps offered.
- Likewise, the Visualize 2050 process has lacked accountability in reducing global warming pollution despite the 2021 board resolution to do so.
- Our region simply can't afford these delays in fighting climate change.
- We ask the Board to move forward the promising greenhouse gas strategies - both committing to local action and convening a regional initiative.
- In particular, these strategies effectively address regional goals:
 - Transit-oriented development
 - Conversion of existing highway lanes to HOT or HOTTER* lanes, rather than simply adding lanes
 - Parking cashout and reform
 - Pay-go insurance
 - E-bike incentives and infrastructure
 - Alternative travel incentives
 - Longer-term road pricing options

Thank you for your work.

* HOTTER lanes are High-Occupancy, Transit, and Tolloed vehicles on Existing lanes with Rewards for those who carpool or take transit. See this summary article by the American Planning Association:
<https://www.planning.org/blog/9296898/reimagine-tolling-with-hotter-lanes/>

Bill Pugh, AICP CTP | Senior Policy Fellow
Coalition for Smarter Growth
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