



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Steering Committee Actions and Report of the Director
DATE: June 16, 2021

The attached materials are letters and memos received after the TPB mailout date. These include:

- Letter and infographic from Loudoun County – June 8, 2021
- Letter from MDOT – June 15, 2021



June 9, 2021

The Honorable Charles Allen, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington D.C. 20002

Ref: Regional Greenhouse Gas Policy Impact on Transportation Funding

Dear Chair Allen and TPB Members,

Thank you for your leadership and the work of the National Capital Regional Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to plan for our transportation needs in the Washington Region. As one of the fastest growing localities on the East Coast, the work of TPB is critical to Loudoun's ability to manage our growth and plan for the future, and we are truly appreciative of your efforts. In addition, as Chair of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, I know firsthand how important regional cooperation in transportation planning is.

I am writing to share some additional information and context regarding the assessment of transportation projects moving forward. I understand that there is considerable interest and concern about the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and, in turn, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a metric to evaluate adding road projects to the Visualize 2045 plan. I share both your focus and urgency on climate change, which is one reason why Loudoun County has undertaken some of the most impactful land use and transit investments in the entire region over the past decade.

I do have concerns, however, about the focus on VMT as a primary indicator of projects. Loudoun County's population growth has far exceeded our infrastructure, requiring major investments in virtual every category, including roads. Some of our communities remain disconnected, while others face constant congestion, with negative consequences to air quality and GHG emissions. The project put forward by Loudoun and by VDOT for inclusion in this year's Visualize 2045 update, the Route 50 Northern Collector Road which will connect Air and Space Parkway and Route 28 to Tall Cedars Parkway and Route 50 in Loudoun, is a project intended to address those issues and should be included in the regional transportation plan. Leaving it out would jeopardize its ability to receive federal funding would directly contradict all our goals.

The Route 50 Northern Collector Road is a regionally significant collaboration between Loudoun County and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. Preliminary engineering and traffic analysis results indicate that this project will provide new opportunities for transit connections, reduce congestion, improve access for people walking and biking, improve access for freight vehicles, and improve access to Dulles International Airport and the Udvar-Hazy Center at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.



Loudoun County

VIRGINIA

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair At-Large

Board of Supervisors

1 Harrison Street, SE, PO Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

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The Route 50 Northern Collector project will significantly decrease congestion and idling at the Route 50-Route 28 interchange, which presents constant bottlenecks and impedes travel to Washington Dulles International Airport. Loudoun County has been hard at work developing activity centers that combine higher density residential, office, and transit connections. The Route 50 Northern Collector Road will connect activity centers in Fairfax County and Loudoun to allow better circulation and access for residents from throughout the region.

The potential loss of access to federal funds on a project like the Route 50 Northern Collector Road could also limit economic development and public-private partnership opportunities. We also believe failure to include this project in TPB's plans may inadvertently jeopardize federal funds to the entire region, since federal regulations require that "regionally significant" projects like this one be placed in the regional transportation plan.

Jurisdictions like Loudoun are heavily dependent upon regional funds, like those from the NVTAA. Some jurisdictions represented on the TPB have suggested that projects that increase capacity or VMT should not be in the Plan. A philosophy of this nature is problematic for local jurisdictions like Loudoun who continue to develop a road, transit, and bike/pedestrian network consistent with well-established and coordinated comprehensive land-use and transportation plans. The attached pamphlet describes the multimodal transportation network under development in Loudoun County.

We understand the TPB is considering a delayed approval of the Visualize 2045 plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). There is also discussion around the adoption of an alternative plan that appears to be inconsistent with federal regulations by omitting "regionally significant" projects, like Loudoun's Route 50 Northern Collector Road project. This could place the entire plan update at serious risk of being rejected when it goes through the federal review process. Delaying the plan update or creating an alternative plan will jeopardize access to federal funding for state and local jurisdictions, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Purposely omitting regionally significant projects that increase capacity will limit many of the projects included in the NVTAA TransAction Plan and create prejudice against local jurisdictions.

Loudoun County will continue to support the vital role of the TPB in guiding regional transportation decision making through the implementation of complete streets, prioritization of transit, smart growth around the new Silver Line Metrorail Stations and will continue to partner with regional jurisdictions on transportation planning matters that make sense and support all jurisdictional needs. We ask that you respect our commitment to our shared goals and principles and support our ability to provide critical road projects to our citizens.



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If you would like to discuss this matter with Loudoun staff, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Bob Brown in the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure at Bob.Brown@loudoun.gov.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Randall, Chair
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

Attachment: Info Graphic Loudoun County Transportation Program

CC: Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Tim Hemstreet, County Administrator
Kanti Srikanth, Director, Transportation Planning Board
Monica Backmon, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Maria Sinner, PE, VDOT Assistant District Administrator for Planning and Investment
Joe Kroboth, III, PE, Director, DTCI
John Thomas, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning & Traffic Engineering, DTCI
Bob Brown, Regional Transportation Coordinator, DTCI

LEARN HOW LOUDOUN COUNTY HAS INVESTED IN TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

AT A GLANCE



PLAN

Loudoun County has embarked on a planning process to identify the community's desires for the future of transportation and land use in the County.



COMPLETE AND GREEN STREETS

Loudoun County's approach to completing its roadway infrastructure plays a role in slowing the growth of congestion, reducing emissions, and maintaining economically viable and mobile communities.



MULTIMODAL

Loudoun County is building a reliable and efficient multimodal transportation network that manages the travel demands of the County while maintaining fiscal and environmental sustainability.



INVEST

Loudoun County is making a significant investment in creating a sustainable, accessible transportation network.



PROMOTE

Loudoun County is building neighborhoods to promote working and living in our urban and suburban areas with direct access to transit and shared use paths and paved regional trails.



EQUITY

Loudoun County is meeting the needs of our diverse populations by providing access to transit facilities and encouraging alternative modes of transportation.



ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Loudoun County is creating accessible activity centers to accommodate the county's future growth and play a role in achieving sustainability, accessibility and livability goals.



Loudoun County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation, which has resulted in a continued and ever-increasing strain on its transportation network. In addition, Loudoun County is the second largest county in terms of land mass in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This unprecedented growth provides an opportunity for the County to build a modern, efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure to boost our economic productivity, competitiveness, and enhance the quality of life in our urban, suburban and rural communities. The County is investing in and promoting transit, increasing access to sidewalks and trails, creating sustainable, accessible and livable activity centers, and making capital investments in Loudoun County's transportation future.



PLAN

Planning for Loudoun County's Transportation Future

In 2016, Loudoun County began a collaborative multiyear effort and an unprecedented public outreach campaign that brought together Loudoun's residents, elected and appointed officials, stakeholders, and County staff to create a new comprehensive plan. This planning process identified the community's desires for the future of the County as they relate to growth management, land use, place types, transportation, natural, environmental, and heritage resources, community facilities and amenities, economic development and fiscal management. Loudoun County is focusing on context-sensitive planning and design that addresses the unique characteristics and needs of the County's urban, suburban, and rural landscape. Our land use policies are designed to reduce vehicular trips and vehicle miles traveled to achieve the most stringent air quality standards.

- The Urban Policy Area in Loudoun County represents a new, innovative planning area concept in Loudoun County, encompassing approximately 2,600 acres in mixed use areas around the Silver Line Metrorail stations with access to Metrorail, bus, sidewalks and trails.
- The 48,000-acre Suburban Policy Area in Loudoun County comprises the eastern third of the County and the focus is to connect these areas to the urban areas through a multi modal approach.
- The Transition Policy Area in Loudoun County is a 24,000- acre area planned for a diversity of clustered residential uses and commercial uses to support residents and some industrial spaces focused on quarry activity and energy infrastructure.
- The western 230,000-acre Rural Policy Area in Loudoun County comprises nearly two-thirds of the county's land area and contains twelve Rural Historic Villages. This area is planned for agricultural preservation, agribusiness and limited residential development that supports a robust rural economy.



COMPLETE AND GREEN STREETS

Loudoun County’s approach to completing its roadway infrastructure plays a role in slowing the growth of congestion, reducing emissions, and maintaining economically viable and mobile communities. Loudoun County’s roads form the backbone of its transportation network. The landscape features a road system that attempts to address future congestion concerns for motor vehicles, freight vehicles, and emergency vehicles access and connectivity for people walking and biking, and accommodations for transit users. Loudoun County is building out a network to support economic and housing growth consistent with local and regional plans. The county’s plan considers the importance of ensuring that roads serving each of the unique policy areas are designed and constructed in a manner consistent with the character of adjoining communities and land uses.

Balancing Building Roads and the Environmental Impact on that Growth

Reducing Vehicle Miles of Travel

When building roads, Loudoun County’s goal is to reduce congestion and the pollution congestion creates. The county’s roads undergo environmental scrutiny, are designed with bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and bring people to our bus and metrorail services and park and ride lots. In 2012, the county conducted the Eastern Loudoun Transportation Study and identified nearly 100 road segments, bottlenecks and interchanges that needed improvement to keep people moving. Since 2013, 40% of the projects identified in the study have been constructed VDOT or developers, and the County is currently working on planning and constructing of the remaining segments.

40

complete streets completed.

5

complete streets partially completed.

23

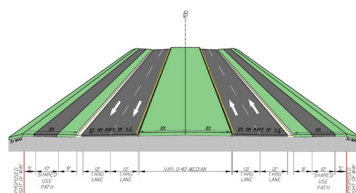
complete streets in progress.

17

complete streets waiting approval and placement in Capital Improvement Plan.

4

complete streets in Capital Improvement Plan, but not yet started.





MULTIMODAL

Loudoun County is building a reliable and efficient multimodal transportation network that manages the travel demands of the County with an emphasis on fiscal and environmental sustainability. The County is focusing on a context-sensitive system that fits the natural and built environments. Moreover, 73 percent of Loudoun County Transit bus routes connecting to the region.

Growing Our Multimodal Transportation System

26

Park & Ride lots providing a total of 6,000 spaces (existing & planned).

63

Daily routes provided by Loudoun County Transit.

33

Commuter bus routes to Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C.

16

Metro Connection Routes





INVEST

Loudoun County has created a sustainable, accessible transportation network. The County has made a significant investment in the Silver Line Metrorail, Metrorail garages, buses, and pedestrian improvements around the stations.

Transportation Investments

\$41
MILLION

For Metrorail Area
Pedestrian/Bicycle
Improvements.

\$120
MILLION

Spent on transit
operations,
Metrorail, bus
investments
and bus stop
improvements.

\$273
MILLION

In Silver Line
construction
funding.

\$138
MILLION

In improving
intersection
safety around
the County.

\$301
MILLION

Allocated in the
Capital Improvement
Plan for sidewalks,
signals, traffic calming
and transit.

**METRORAIL
GARAGES**

5,000 total spaces at the Loudoun
Gateway and Ashburn Stations.



PROMOTE

Loudoun County is building neighborhoods to promote working and living in our urban and suburban areas with direct access to transit and 280 miles of sidewalks, shared use paths and paved regional trails. Loudoun County is one of a few areas in the region where people can enjoy beautiful landscapes—traveling from urban centers to rural rolling hills on from the same paths and trails. In addition, Loudoun County Transit unveiled a mobile app to connect commuters to the region’s transportation network.

Promoting Transit-Oriented Development



Loudoun Station



Silver District West



Rivana



Connect to our regional transportation network through the Transit app.



EQUITY

Loudoun County is enhancing the regional and local transit infrastructure in response to population growth and congestion. Through an emphasis on traditionally underserved populations and improving interconnectivity, Loudoun County is meeting the needs of our diverse populations by providing access to transit facilities, encouraging alternative modes of transportation and planning for shared use paths.

Taking a Holistic Approach to Transportation Infrastructure



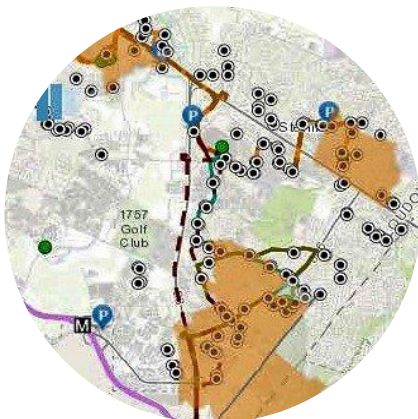
Transit Bus



Park & Ride



W&OD Trail



Transit Serving Equity
Emphasis Areas



Shared-Use Path



Metrorail Station



ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Loudoun County is creating accessible activity centers to accommodate the County's future growth and play a role in achieving sustainability, accessibility and livability goals. To do this, the County is identifying transit corridors, utilizing Silver Line stations and linking regional and community centers in ways that support greater density and connectivity. Loudoun County businesses have access to the most educated labor pools with information and communications technology being the largest industry cluster. The County's economic landscape is a balance of technology, federal government contractors, biomedical research and agribusiness.

Making Land Use Decisions to Create Accessible Activity Centers and Create Jobs



Activity Centers



Agricultural Business and Preservation



Fastest-Growing County in Virginia



Top Business Growth in Virginia

June 15, 2021

The Honorable Charles Allen, Chairman
Kanathur Srikanth, Deputy Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington DC 20002

Dear Chairman Allen and Director Srikanth:

I am writing to seek clarification on several points that came up in our discussion during the May 19, 2021 meeting of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) relating to consideration of projects for inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and the proposed resolutions that TPB received since last month that could radically alter TPB's current approval practice. Given the recent information regarding an alternative resolution, this issue may be resolved amicably, but in the case that the original resolution moves forward, there are still many concerns that need to be addressed before we move forward.

It was indicated during this meeting that a resolution would be introduced that would potentially cause a delay in completing the Air Quality Conformity Analysis, or call on TPB staff to conduct an additional analysis of an as-yet-undefined alternative plan that would remove new road projects that are currently part of local agencies' adopted plans and Visualize 2045. Aside from the obvious problems such a move would present to area residents, who already face some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation, I have several specific questions regarding these proposals and their impacts:

1. Does TPB have enough time, staff and budget resources to conduct an additional conformity analysis of an alternative plan, in addition to the one that has been developed through extensive work by TPB and member agencies since the beginning of 2020?
2. How do you propose to conduct such an analysis on an alternative plan that contains as-yet-undefined "new projects" and alternative land-use assumptions that have not been approved by local jurisdictions?
3. What metrics would be used to evaluate such a plan, and have those metrics been identified? Will those metrics include an analysis of travel time impacts, congestion impacts, access to job opportunities and affordable housing within a 45-minute commuting

radius, and any lost economic growth and job creation that would result from removal of billions of dollars of approved projects in such an alternative plan? This information is critical to allow TPB members to make a fully informed decision and weigh the various trade-offs.

4. How much would it cost to do this additional analysis? If there is insufficient funding in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), who will bear the additional cost? Would it be the jurisdictions voting in favor of the resolution?
5. How much additional time would it take to do this additional analysis, and what risks does this pose of delaying federal funding or approval of current or planned projects and planning studies in various jurisdictions that depend on federal funds?
6. If TPB were to adopt a plan that is not constrained fiscally, and is not clearly defined as to specific projects, land use changes or metrics, would that action be in accordance with federal requirements for conformity analysis, or would it not conform?
7. Can TPB adopt an alternative plan that contains land-use changes proposed by TPB for the purposes of this resolution, but are not adopted by the applicable local governments? Would this be seen as misleading by federal agencies?
8. Could the passage of such a resolution and any resulting delay in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis either delay or put at risk federal funding for WMATA and other local transportation agency projects that rely on federal funding, yes or no?

For the TPB members to properly consider all consequences – intended and unintended – these questions will need to be answered. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) continues to have much broader concerns about last-minute efforts to essentially re-litigate all of the good work of the Long Range Plan Task Force and the TPB staff that resulted in the current Visualize 2045 Plan. The plan offers the right balance of investments and a path to achieving our air quality goals for this region, while also ensuring a strong economy and improved quality of life for our residents.

As I have indicated before, Visualize 2045 came about because traffic modeling analysis of the previous long-range plans indicated a dramatic worsening of congestion by 2040, even if everything in those previous plans were built. The American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-70 Relief Plan is an integral part of the Expanded Regional Express Lane Network in Visualize 2045, as it will provide important new regional transit options and dramatically improve congested conditions around major chokepoints like the American Legion Bridge and I-270.

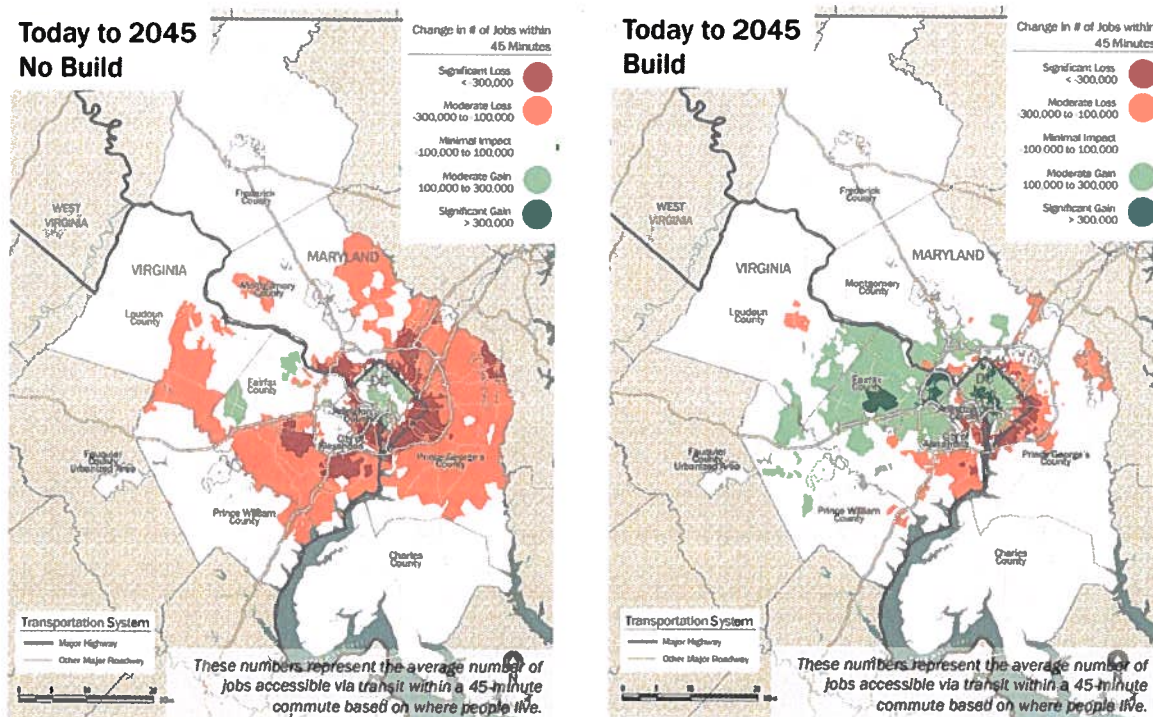
As the region seeks to reduce our dependence on driving alone, this plan will encourage carpooling by exempting cars with three or more passengers and buses from the tolls. No proposed transit-

only alternative has ever been found that delivers any meaningful traffic relief to the American Legion Bridge or I-270, despite over 30 years of multimodal studies in both corridors.

As projected by the TPB's performance analysis, the National Capital Region is projected to add 1.3 million residents by 2045. Multiple studies over the last decade have shown that the National Capital Region is one of the most congested metropolitan regions in the nation, and Marylanders faced the second highest commuting times in the country. The American Legion Bridge I-270 to I-70 Relief Plan is a long-term regional plan that allows MDOT to prepare for projected increasing traffic volumes and commute times between now and 2045.

We need to consider not only the critical air-quality impacts of our long-range plans, but also the transportation, equity, economic opportunity and quality-of-life impacts of our plans. We must provide an effective way forward on achieving our air quality goals in a way that also provides area residents with improved access to jobs, affordable housing, and educational, cultural and recreational activities throughout the region as well. Our economy depends on it.

As an example, the area in red here indicates the dramatic decline in access to jobs the region will experience, without the build elements of Visualize 2045, in terms of reduced access to job opportunities within a 45-minute commute radius. In comparison, the build scenario shows dramatic improvements in job access and much fewer areas of significant decline



(Source: TPB Performance Analysis Summary, September 7, 2018, p.23-24)

The large green area in the build scenario indicates a dramatic expansion in access to jobs for most

The Honorable Charles Allen and Kanathur Srikanth
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of the region, benefiting some 209,000 residents, as compared to the dramatic decline in access for almost everyone in the No Build above. The gain in access to jobs by transit was equally

impressive in the 2045 Build scenario compared to the No Build, and the proposed HOT lanes on I-495 and I-270 expand both auto and transit access, as part of a truly multimodal approach.

Given that access to jobs is both a key economic benefit and an equity concern, the TPB should be provided with an equivalent analysis of any alternative plan that is developed that does not include all the build elements of Visualize 2045. This will help us evaluate any relative changes in the 45-minute commute radius, both by transit and by auto, for that plan as well. This analysis is critical.

In summary, we have serious concerns with any last-minute changes or efforts to remove key elements of Visualize 2045. We believe doing so would ignore TPB's own research data, negate years of work by the Long-Range Plan Task Force, erode local jurisdictions' authority to determine their own transportation and land-use priorities, and risk setting our region up for catastrophic failure of our transportation system and the severe economic hardship that would result, especially for lower-income families, from reduced access to jobs.

MDOT continues to be committed to addressing climate change, and we remain in agreement with our regional stakeholders that we should work together towards the goals that the State of Maryland has committed to achieve along side our partners in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia.

We appreciate your coordination, and if you need further assistance, please contact Ms. Heather Murphy at 410-865-1275 or via email at hmurphy@mdot.maryland.gov. She will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



R. Earl Lewis, Jr.
Deputy Secretary

cc: Ms. Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming,
MDOT