



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Stacy Cook, TPB Transportation Planner/Long-Range Transportation Plan Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Information to support board action on Visualize 2045: Regional and Federal Policy Alignment for All Projects  
**DATE:** May 13, 2021

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At its June 2021 meeting, the TPB staff will ask the board to approve the inputs to the air quality conformity analysis (conformity analysis) of the long-range transportation plan (Visualize 2045) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the scope of work for the conformity analysis. They will also be asked to accept the comments from the 2021 comment period on these inputs, in the form of the comment/response summary.

Please note, the projects proposed to be included in the air quality conformity analysis are a subset of projects in Visualize 2045 and TIP. Not all projects in the plan and TIP can, nor should be, included in the conformity analysis. Federal conformity analysis regulations inform the projects and programs to be included in the analysis and publishes a list of projects that are exempt from such analysis. Also, the inputs, assumptions, and methodology used to conduct the conformity analysis are guided by the federal requirements to ensure that estimated levels of criteria pollutants comply with the federally established emissions levels.

This memorandum and its associated [appendices](#) with the responses to policy questions (32-45 of the Technical Inputs Solicitation) for all capital projects provide information to assist board members as they continue their review and discussions, from last month, of the projects proposed to be included in the regional conformity analysis. The focus of the last month's review and discussions were the policy related information sought for the various projects.

### **Project Inputs for Conformity Analysis**

The Technical Inputs Solicitation document was approved by the TPB on December 20, 2020. The document provides an overview of the process used by TPB to solicit technical inputs (projects, programs and policies) to be included in Visualize 2045, the TIP and the conformity analysis. The solicitation documents place a particular emphasis on projects that would have to be included in the regional air quality conformity analysis.

### **Regionally Significant Projects**

Federal regulations (40.CFR.Part 93), based in the Clean Air Act Amendments (section 176(c); 42 U.S.C. 7506(c)), prescribes the process and method for conformity. These regulations dictate that "regionally significant projects" shall be included in the conformity analysis. While all projects across our region are important because of the local and regional benefits they provide, the term 'regional significance' has a specific meaning as used by the TPB and the federal agencies in reference to air quality conformity.

The definition from federal regulation document (40 CFR § 93.101) is:

"Regionally significant project means a transportation project (other than an exempt project) that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside of the region, major activity centers in the region, major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, etc., or transportation terminals as well as most terminals themselves) and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area's transportation network, including at a minimum all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel."

At the TPB, the staff interpret this definition for the purposes of the technical inputs solicitation as below, irrespective of the funding used for the project.

- 1) Any project on a facility that is included in the TPB model's coded regional network that adds or removes at least one continuous vehicular lane from one major road to the next, or adds a new access/egress location or capacity; or
- 2) Any transit project that adds or modifies fixed-guideway transit facilities (heavy rail, light rail, streetcar, bus rapid transit).

These technical inputs are what the TPB staff include in the air quality conformity project input tables which the TPB staff makes available for comment. After this review the TPB staff asks the TPB to approve the projects along with the scope of work to conduct the conformity analysis so that the required analysis may begin. While the TPB periodically conducts studies to explore alternative or aspirational scenarios regarding future land use, travel demand, transportation projects, programs, policies and fuel types to identify strategies for future implementation, the air quality conformity analysis must be based on official latest planning assumptions with a demonstration of the funding availability to implement all projects, programs and policies assumed in the conformity analysis.

## **TPB Policy Framework and Federal Planning Factors**

The TPB's Visualize 2045 includes a policy element that informs its planning and programming activities. There are a set of documents that comprise this policy framework communicating the region's transportation goals, priorities, and needs that member agencies ought to consider making transportation investment and implementation decisions on projects that have to be part of the regional plan and TIP. The TPB takes strides to achieve its goals and address its priorities through the projects, programs, and policies in Visualize 2045.

Additionally, federal law identifies a list of planning factors meant to guide metropolitan planning. Collectively, the projects, programs, and policies in Visualize 2045 must address these factors. Please visit [Visualize2045.org](https://visualize2045.org) to learn more about these planning factors. A summary of these policy elements is included in each of the appendices.

## **REGIONAL AND FEDERAL POLICY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

The TPB's project description form has several questions needed to help staff develop the Plan, TIP and prepare for the conformity analysis. Among these, questions 32 thru 45 relate to the TPB's policy priorities and federal planning factors. When projects are submitted to the TPB through the technical inputs solicitation process, the sponsoring agency technical staff are asked to provide

responses these policy questions. The responses help the project sponsor communicate how the project supports the TPB goals, Aspirational Initiatives, and the federal planning factors. A listing of the policy questions is included in each appendix. While most questions are binary (yes/no), four questions seek narrative responses to explain if and how the project addresses issues of equity, greenhouse gas reduction, and how it supports the Aspirational Initiatives and TPB goals. Not all projects that were reviewed by the TPB members during their April work session had this information.

While agencies were asked to provide these responses, by April 1, for all new projects and existing projects for which major changes were being proposed, agencies had requested and secured additional time (end of April) to provide the information for remaining projects that were in previous editions of the plan. All of the information received for the policy questions, for existing and new projects, have now been compiled for the board's use. Given the large number of projects, the information has been arranged and included in appendices and tables. The following section is a guide on how to use the appendices and tables.

## **VISUALIZE 2045 UPDATE: PROJECT LEVEL POLICY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

For each existing or proposed project, staff from the sponsoring agencies have responded to policy questions including narrative responses. These responses are listed in tables 1-4 as described below.

The projects listed are the same in each table 1-4. These tables are mapped against the policy questions of the Technical Inputs Solicitation document, showing how projects support:

- Table 1: the goals of the TPB's Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (regional policy questions 32-42 that require a binary response)
- Table 2: Aspirational Initiatives, (regional policy question 43, binary response)
- Table 3: Federal Planning Factors (federal policy question 45, binary response).
- Table 4: narrative responses
  - If a person that reviews the binary responses in the matrices would like more information, the following questions include a narrative response:
    - equity (question 34b),
    - GHG reduction (question 40b),
    - support for the Aspirational Initiatives (44a) or
    - the regional goals (44b).

Each project has a project identification number listed, to quickly find this project across the various tables, this number is a useful reference. (*Hint: If one views the file on a computer, use of a search feature (such as pressing control+f on the keyboard) to search this project number, to expedite one finding the same project throughout the document*).

### **Organization of the Appendices:**

Each appendix starts with this memorandum, followed by the TPB policy summary and questions, then the responses in summary tables 1-4. The sponsoring agency(ies) provided the yes/no and written responses for each project for questions 32-45 for each project. The TPB staff facilitated the administrative development of appendices A-K to present the capital projects (existing and proposed, by geographic area) in Visualize 2045 and the TIP.

The [appendices](#) are organized by state and county for projects that are within those geographies (in other words, the projects are organized by geography, not lead agency). Appendix A-K include this memorandum and the policy framework and questions. To find state-level projects that traverse more than one jurisdiction please see the MDOT and VDOT multijurisdictional appendices E and K. Not all geographies, jurisdictions or member agencies have projects that must be in the constrained element of Visualize 2045. Some agencies, such as WMATA, may not have projects listed in the constrained element but do have regular activity such as WMATA maintenance and vehicle replacement programs which are not listed here. To learn more about local or operational projects, please visit the local jurisdiction's or agency's website.

All of the appendices can be found by online by [clicking here](#) or using the following webpage: <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2021/05/12/information-to-support-board-action-on-the-update-to-visualize-2045-regional-and-federal-policy-alignment-for-all-capital-projects-tpb-visualize-2045/>

APPENDIX	CONTENT	JURISDICTION
A	Responses to policy questions in Tables 1 thru 4	District of Columbia
B	As above	Frederick County
C	As above	Montgomery County
D	As above	Prince George's County
E	As above	Multi-jurisdictional projects in Maryland/MARC <sup>1</sup>
F	As above	City of Alexandria
G	As above	Arlington County
H	As above	Fairfax County
I	As above	Loudoun County
J	As above	Prince William County and the City of Manassas
K	As above	VDOT / VDRPT / VRE/ multiple jurisdiction/owner projects

## HOW TO USE THE APPENDICES

### Overview:

- If there is a particular area of the region you are interested in, find the appendix by state/county.
- If there is a particular type of project you are interested in, note each table lists projects in categories of roadway or transit as the primary project types, many of these projects also include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as indicated in Table 1.
- If there is a particular type of question you are interested in, see the guidance above as to what questions are addressed in Tables 1-4.

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<sup>1</sup> Note, while the local government is advancing transportation projects in Charles County and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has projects that traverse the county, there is not a county-specific appendix. Please see the Appendix E for the projects that traverse Charles County.