



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer
SUBJECT: Intercity Travel Study Overview
DATE: January 26, 2024

This memorandum provides background material for an upcoming study on intercity bus and rail travel, which will be briefed to the TPB Technical Committee at its February 2, 2024 meeting. The purpose of the study will be to collect regional information on intercity bus and rail travel to meet federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning and to improve regional knowledge. This study will build on the staff research conducted in May 2023 and the TPB work session conducted in October 2023. This study is part of the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and will continue into FY 2025.

Background

In the fall of 2016, TPB staff conducted a count of intercity bus travel to and from the metropolitan Washington region for the TPB. The impetus for the study was the May 2016 updated federal planning regulations which called for the inclusion of intercity bus facilities in the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. The report on the study collected information on bus stations and stops in the region, bus providers, trips and ridership, and rider origins and destinations.

- Final Report: [Intercity Bus Traffic and Patronage in the Metropolitan Washington Region](#).
- Presentation to the April 2017 meeting of the TPB Technical Committee: [2016 Count of Intercity Bus Traffic](#).

In 2023, TPB staff began the groundwork for updating regional intercity travel information. The results of a desk audit were presented to the TPB in June 2023:

- Presentation to the June 2023 meeting of the TPB: [Intercity Bus and Rail Travel Overview](#)

In October 2023, the TPB held an intercity rail and bus travel work session, with representatives from Amtrak, Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), American Bus Association (ABA), Maryland Department of Transportation - Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

- Work session event: <https://www.mwcog.org/events/2023/10/18/intercity-rail-and-bus-travel-work-session/>

Study Outline

A consultant or team of consultants will be hired to conduct the work of the study, under the oversight of TPB staff and with input from regional TPB member staff, including the TPB Technical Committee and the TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee who will be involved as this work progresses.

The consultant will expand on previous TPB analysis of intercity bus and rail travel by:

- a) examining both wholly private services, as well as services that are publicly funded and/or operated under public contract (e.g., Virginia Breeze, Bayrunner, etc.);
- b) studying commuter bus (e.g. MTA, Loudoun County Transit, and Omniride.) and commuter rail (e.g., MARC and VRE) providing similar or complementary services to intercity travel providers (e.g., Baltimore – Washington travel, or other travel from points outside the region); and finally,
- c) collecting intercity travel data and information, to include ridership, intercity trips by time of day and day of week, station and stop locations, traveler demographics, traveler origins and destinations (inc. jurisdiction/zip code of residence), traveler trip purpose (e.g., business or tourism), and traveler modes of access. Other details will be determined.

The consultant will prepare a draft and final report on the information collected, as well as a webmap with geographic data. A tentative timeline is for delivery of these materials by the end of calendar year 2024, which will enable incorporation of appropriate information into the Visualize 2050 regional transportation plan.