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**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**HYBRID**  
December 20, 2023

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *IN-PERSON*

Reuben Collins, TPB Chair – Charles County  
Christina Henderson – DC Council  
Charles Allen – DC Council  
Heather Edelman – DC Council  
Mark Rawlings – DDOT  
Denise Mitchell – College Park  
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg  
Marc Korman – MD House of Delegates  
Bridget Newton – Rockville  
Takis Karantonis – Arlington County  
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas  
Ann Wheeler – Prince William County  
Victor Angry – Prince William County

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *VIRTUALLY*

Anna Chamberlin - DDOT  
Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning  
Mati Bzurto – Bowie  
Mark Mishler – Frederick County  
Jessica Fitzwater – Frederick County  
Kelly Russell - City of Frederick  
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County  
Oluseyi Olugbenie – Prince George’s County  
Victor Weissburg – Prince George’s County  
Eric Olson – Prince George’s County  
Heather Murphy – MDOT  
Kris Fair – Maryland House  
Marc Korman – Maryland House  
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria  
Dan Malouff – Arlington County  
Tom Ross - City of Fairfax  
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County  
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County  
Dave Snyder – Falls Church  
Rob Donaldson- Loudoun County  
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County  
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park  
Maria Sinner – VDOT  
Allison Davis – WMATA  
Mark Phillips - WMATA  
Julia Koster – NCPC  
Laurel Hammig – NPS

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MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth  
Lyn Erickson  
Andrew Meese  
Nick Ramfos  
Mark Moran  
Tim Canan  
Leo Pineda  
John Swanson  
Sergio Ritacco  
Rachel Beyerle  
Deborah Etheridge  
Kim Sutton  
Jamie Bufkin  
Janie Nham  
Eric Randall  
Lindsey Martin  
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County  
Andrew Bossi – Montgomery County  
Richard Wallace – CAC Chair  
Will Pines – MDOT  
Kari Snyder – MDOT  
Drew Morrison – MDOT  
Bill Orleans - public

**1. PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Chair Reuben Collins called the meeting to order. He said the meeting was being conducted in a hybrid format. He described the procedures for conducting the meeting.

Lyn Erickson conducted a roll call. Attendance for the meeting can be found on the first pages of the minutes. She confirmed there was a quorum.

Chair Collins said that there would be no in-person public comments. He asked Lyn Erickson to summarize the comments received online.

Lyn Erickson said that three comments had been received online. She said that Bill Pugh, with the Coalition for Smarter Growth, provided comments about the pollution health impacts of motor vehicles and expressed concern that these impacts would continue with increased regional VMT and greater vehicle weight electric vehicles. She said that Stewart Schwartz, with the Coalition for Smarter Growth, provided a comment on the importance for COG and its members to prioritize funding for Metro. Finally, she said that George Aburn, a volunteer with a D.C. environmental justice coalition, submitted environmental justice comments on his assessment that the TPB is failing to address localized high-risk air pollution hot spots caused by transportation-related emissions.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

Pamela Sebesky made a motion to approve the November 15, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mati Bazaruto. The motion was approved unanimously.

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### **3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

Referring to the posted meeting summary, Mark Rawlings said the technical committee met on December 1. He said that three items were reviewed for inclusion on the TPB agenda. These included a staff report on the performance-based planning and programming targets for transit safety and highway safety, a staff report on the 2023 Enhanced Mobility Grant Program, and a staff briefing on the Visualize 2050 update. Additionally, two information items were presented: An update on the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant and a staff briefing on the High Capacity Transit Local Transit Access Study.

Chair Collins presented Mark Rawlings with a certificate recognizing his service to the region as Technical Committee chair.

### **4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT & ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Richard Wallace said the Community Advisory Committee met on December 14. He said the meeting was chaired by CAC vice chair Ra Amin. He said the group discussed two important topics: A federal climate change grant and trail planning.

Chair Collins presented Reuben Collins with a certificate recognizing his service to the region as Community Advisory Committee chair.

TPB Vice Chair Christina Henderson, who also serves as chair of the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee, gave a report on the AFA meeting on November 27. She said that at the meeting, Melissa Kim, WMATA's program manager, provided an update on their Better Bus Initiative. She said Mohammad Khan from TPB's Enhanced Mobility Program Manager provided an update on the enhanced mobility solicitation process. She said that staff from Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation provided an overview of a new map-based multimodal trip planning tool on its Connecting VA website. She said that Andrew Meese and Michael Farrell from TPB provided an update on the National Capital Trail Network.

Christina Henderson said that at the AFA meeting she also announced that she would be stepping down as AFA chair.

Chair Collins presented Christina Henderson with a certificate recognizing her service to the region as AFA chair.

### **5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR**

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on December 1 and approved one amendment to the TIP, at the request of DDOT, to add \$4.75 million in federal and District funds for the rehabilitation of the 16th Street Bridge over Piney Branch in Northwest.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB issued a letter of support for an application from the Maryland Department of Transportation for a federal national electric vehicle infrastructure grant fund.

Kanti Srikanth said that on December 7, the Federal Highway Administration finalized a new rule that requires all state departments of transportation to set greenhouse gas reduction targets for a two-year period and for a four-year period. He provided some details about this rule and said staff has begun discussions with the state DOTs about how to respond. He said a briefing would be provided to the board in January.

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Kanti Srikanth reminded the board that staff is developing a transportation resilience improvement plan, which is a federal requirement. Calling attention to posted material for this item, he spoke about the reduced match requirements for local projects that are included in the regional plan. He asked board members to remind their agency staff to consider including their resiliency projects in the TPB's plan.

Noting some announcements that were not in his report, Kanti Srikanth said that nine TPB member agencies have been awarded federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grants. He said a memo with the individual grant awardees has been posted under the meeting Item 5, and it is on the TPB meeting page.

Finally, Kanti Srikanth gave a brief update on COG efforts to help address WMATA's budget challenges. He said a COG group has been meeting since August and has issued an interim report that identifies a set of factors that offset the operating costs of WMATA, and the report has some recommendations on how these factors should be addressed as part of finalizing the operating budget for the next fiscal year at WMATA. He also said the report notes the need for and commits COG and its staff to assist in a larger undertaking at the regional level to comprehensively examine and address all facets of WMATA's transit service, the service profile offered by WMATA, the cost structure affecting those services, the management and governance of WMATA.

Dave Snyder asked staff to develop a response to the comments from Tad Aburn.

## **6. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Chair Collins said the meeting would conclude his term as TPB chair. He noted that Ann Wheeler and Bridget Newton would be leaving the board. He presented them with certificates.

Ann Wheeler thanked the board. She said she believes in regionalism.

Bridget Newton also thanked the board and said the work of the TPB is very important.

In his closing remarks, Chair Collins thanked the board and expressed appreciation for the support he received from past chairs. He said the board has accomplished a lot this year, including initiating the long-range plan update, focused on resiliency and freight, and engaging regional leadership on the challenges that WMATA is facing. He thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as chair.

## **7. REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2024**

Charles Allen said that this year's nominating committee comprised Bridget Newton, Pam Sebesky, and himself. He said that for second vice chair, the committee was recommending Neil Harris from the City of Gaithersburg Council; for first vice chair, the committee was recommending Mr. James Walkinshaw from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and for the 2024 TPB Chair, the committee was recommending Ms. Christina Henderson from the District of Columbia Council.

Charles Allen made a motion to approve the slate of candidates for 2024. The motion was seconded by Takis Karantonis and was approved unanimously.

Christina Henderson said she was looking forward to working with the board to address regional transportation challenges. She presented Chair Collins with a gift from the board in recognition of his regional leadership.

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## ACTION ITEMS

### 8. PBPP: ANNUAL TARGETS FOR TRANSIT SAFETY AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

Andrew Meese reviewed the draft transit safety targets for the region. He stated that the transit safety targets were presented to the board at its November 2023 meeting. He stated that the month-long comment period had concluded, and no comments were received on the proposed targets.

Andrew Meese noted key statements in the proposed Resolution R4-2024 including the statement that any number of fatalities and serious injuries on the region's roadways are unacceptable and contrary to the region's aspirations and that the TPB continues to support efforts to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

Andrew Meese said that TPB staff recommends that the TPB adopt Resolution R4-2024 to approve regional transit safety targets.

Denise Mitchell made a motion to adopt Resolution R4-2024 to approve regional transit safety targets.

Pamela Sebesky seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution R4-2024 was unanimously approved.

Janie Nham reviewed the draft highway safety targets recommended by staff for the 2020-2024 period. She stated that the TPB and TPB Technical Committee were briefed in November 2023.

Janie Nham stated that in addition to continuing with the TPB's established safety program activities, TPB staff is considering new activities to undertake in 2024. She said that the potential activities include a safety deep dive study similar to the study completed by the TPB in 2021 that would include analysis of crashes inside and outside Equity Emphasis Areas and a proposed study to survey member jurisdictions to collect qualitative data about current barriers to implementing safety strategies.

Janie Nham said that other potential activities include a safety work session, standalone forum for policy-level discussions about roadway safety, or guest speaker. She commented that the TPB is considering exploring regional coordination around zero deaths because many TPB member jurisdictions have adopted Vision Zero goals, but it has been piecemeal, and an activity would explore opportunities for regionwide coordination.

Janie Nham said that the TPB will continue to engage federal agencies by submitting comments in response to proposed safety actions and legislation. She said that staff have been reviewing an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking from NHTSA on creating a new federal standard that would require impaired driving prevention technology in new light-duty vehicles. She stated the TPB would also enhance the content of the TPB safety website to include resources for member jurisdictions.

Janie Nham highlighted key clauses in Resolution R5-2024 that state that the TPB acknowledges that the number of fatalities and serious injuries in the region are unacceptably high, which is contrary to its own vision and aspirations. She said that the TPB urges its members to reaffirm road user safety as a top priority and prioritize implementation of projects, programs, and policies in an equitable and non-racist manner consistent with TPB Resolution R3-2021.

Janie Nham said that no comments were received on the highway safety targets during the comment period.

Christina Henderson made a motion to adopt Resolution R5-2024 to approve regional highway safety targets.

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Pamela Sebesky seconded the motion.

Takis Karantonis asked why the TPB has not moved the goals on fatalities. He said that the TPB tries to project better goals on serious injuries and nonmotorist fatalities, but fatalities are stuck, and why is that the case.

Janie Nham said that is a question that engineers and transportation planners are currently looking into, and the TPB has planned a deep dive study in 2024 better understand the nature of the problem.

Kanti Srikanth said that the fatalities target is a reflection of the average over the past few years which the region was making progress on until COVID when national and regional trends reversed. He said that the federal guidelines for target setting for MPOs such as the TPB are very prescriptive and states the MPO should use actual empirical data to arrive at the number, and the target should not reflect aspirations. He stated that while the aspiration is zero deaths, data in the region shows an unacceptably high number of fatalities and serious injuries. He said this is why the proposed fatalities target is not zero. He commented that the item memo includes a comprehensive list of projects, programs, and policies that can be implemented, and the TPB would like to see projects, programs, and policies advanced in the TIP and in the long-range plan that covers engineering, enforcement, education, and vehicle standards.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB made a policy decision when first adopting roadway safety targets that in any year if the data demonstrates an increase in fatalities over the previous year, the TPB would not adopt a higher number of fatalities as its target. He noted this is the case with this set of targets and that is why the TPB has outlined planned activities to support local and state transportation agencies on how to improve efforts to reduce fatalities.

Takis Karantonis stated that he looks forward to the deeper dive study to see what the underlying causes are because this is a death toll that that is beyond unacceptable. He said that he thinks the public needs to understand and to be shown that, and changes in vehicle standards rub against political inertia and commercial interest, and this is an opportunity to express that clearly otherwise the political intention to do Vision Zero seriously begins to fade.

David Snyder said that he thinks the TPB is in an awkward situation based on the methodology of FHWA that that the MPO has to set a target looking back. He said that Mr. Karantonis' comment means that we need a second set of targets that look forward based upon best projection of the actions the TPB members are taking that will hopefully show a future reduction in both fatalities and serious injuries.

David Snyder said that he is going to abstain from the vote on Resolution R5-2024 but wishes to express support for the work of COG, the list of action items, and the discussion that none of us is satisfied and that we are serious.

The motion to adopt Resolution R5-2024 to approve regional highway safety targets was approved. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, abstained from the vote.

## **9. 2022 ENHANCED MOBILITY GRANT PROGRAM APPROVAL**

Nicholas Ramfos provided background on the Enhanced Mobility selection committee's recommendations for funding projects to serve the needs of older adults and people with disabilities in the region. He said that the TPB staff and selection committee request action on Resolution R6-2024 to approve the projects and amend the 2023-2025 Transportation Improvement Program to include the projects. He stated that the selection committee recommended 23 of the 27 applications received, and the total project budget is \$14 million.

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Nicholas Ramfos announced the following organizations as recommended recipients of funding:

The Arc of Greater Prince William; The Arc of Northern Virginia; The Arc of Prince George's County; Wheels to Wellness in partnership with Prince George's County Health; Boat People SOS; Capitol Hill Village Chinese Culture and Community Service Center, Gaithersburg; City of Hyattsville; Community Support Services, Gaithersburg; Dulles Area Transportation Association; Easterseals; ECHO, Leesburg; Fairfax County Jewish Council for the Aging; Leisureworld of Maryland; Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers; New Horizons Support Services, Prince George's County; Opportunities, Inc., Prince George's County; Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia; Seabury Resources for Aging, Prince William County; University of Maryland; and WMATA.

Nicholas Ramfos stated that COG receives 10 percent of the federal funds, or a little over \$1 million, for administrative costs to administer the program regionwide for a two-year cycle. He listed the projects that are not recommended for funding due to not meeting minimum requirements, budget restrictions, or inability to match federal funds. He said that the applicants who do not receive funding will receive communication from COG along with recommendations for improving their applications for the next grant cycle.

Nicholas Ramfos recommended the board adopt Resolution R6-2024 to fund 23 projects using FTA Section 5310 from fiscal year 2022 and 2023 apportionments for the region and to amend the FY 2023-2026 TIP to include these projects.

Takis Karantonis thanked TPB staff for the work on the project to fill a critical transportation need. He asked if the TPB has a way to report back to see how the programs work, the level of service they provide and deliver, and how many people are served.

Nicholas Ramfos said that the programs are monitored carefully because of the need to follow federal guidelines, and every two years COG hosts a best practices forum for all participants. He said that COG also develops case studies for program participants, provides ongoing feedback, and staff also conducts site visits.

Nicholas Ramfos said that there are a myriad of activities linked to the Enhanced Mobility program to make sure that the region is getting the most effective use of the dollars being invested into the community to address the most vulnerable citizens in the region.

Kristen Umstattd asked whether the entities to which the allocations are being made are part of the broader network of service providers that the counties and cities work with as an extension of what the counties and cities do.

Nicholas Ramfos said that the TPB reached out to over 3,000 individuals across the region for the 2023 solicitation, a record number of applications were received, and there were approximately half a dozen new subrecipients applying this solicitation. He said that if there are organizations not on the contact list, TPB staff encourages board and committee members to share those organization names.

Victor Angry made a motion to adopt Resolution R6-2024 to approve funding recommendations for Enhanced Mobility and to approve an amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include these projects.

Takis Karantonis seconded the motion.

Victor Angry commended Commissioner Christina Henderson and the Enhanced Mobility team for the regional effort.

The motion to adopt Resolution R6-2024 was unanimously approved.

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## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### 10. VISUALIZE 2050 STATUS REPORT

#### A. Public Engagement Summary

Cristina Finch provided a final summary of the public engagement period that took place in 2023 and an overview of next steps in the development of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan. She said that this item will also include presentations on the status of two key regional projects which led to the board's six-month extension of the schedule allowing more time to develop project inputs. She stated that Will Pines, Maryland State Highway Administrator, will present on the American Legion Bridge and I-270 corridor program, and Allison Davis, Senior Vice President for Planning and Sustainability, will present on WMATA long-term funding.

Cristina Finch referred to two agenda memos that describe the planning process and key activities for 2024 and a summary of all Visualize 2050 public comments reported in 2023. She stated that the TPB received 997 comments on projects, including both positive and negative comments. She stated that concerns on the projects receiving mostly negative comments primarily centered around skepticism about the ability for roadway widenings to improve congestion over time, concerns about increasing demand for private vehicle travel, and disappointment that transit and active mode infrastructure was not the project's focus.

Cristina Finch said that the Op Lanes Maryland Phase 1 project received the greatest number of negative comments, and the Long Bridge project received the greatest number of positive comments. She stated that the public had the opportunity to offer suggestions for projects not in the Visualize 2045 plan that they would like to see in Visualize 2050. She stated that suggestions included expanding the region's protected bike lane and trail networks, expanding public transportation modes, especially bus rapid transit, light rail, VRE and MARC; improving the frequency and service hours of all transit; improving bicycle and pedestrian access to train and bus stops; and repurposing highway space for public transit.

Cristina Finch stated that TPB staff will review project inputs and coordinate with agencies in January and February 2024, She said that staff will prepare project information to share with the public for the March comment period, a summary of public input will be provided to the board in April, and an air quality analysis scope of work and land use inputs will be shared with the board in May 2024.

#### B. Maryland Express Lanes Projects

Will Pines stated that Governor Moore submitted the federal grant application for the corridor program, and the Maryland State Highway Administration(MSHA) planned and hosted four American Legion Bridge and I-270 open houses in November and December 2023. He said that the new project website is [americanlegionbridge270.com](http://americanlegionbridge270.com).

Will Pines stated that through public engagement MSHA has heard that there is support for bicycle and pedestrian features crossing the river similar to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. He said there is recognition that the existing bridge is aging, and there is support for new and better transit which would require at least one lane for buses to move at speeds better than current congested conditions.

Will Pines said that inclusion of corridor work in the Rockville area was seen as problematic because the congestion challenge is not as great in that area compared to I-270 north of I-370. He said that the MSHA had kicked off a 270 North study to address the northern priority area. He said that MSHA is focusing on multimodal needs as part of the project, and transit expansion options include additional MARC service, commuter bus, BRT expansion, and transportation demand management options.



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Will Pines said that any bridge replacement scenario needs to manage traffic congestion while implementing a staged replacement. He stated that pushed MSHA to more of a widening scenario to manage traffic during the construction of the replacement of the bridge and for future transit.

Marc Korman commented that the TPB Transportation Improvement Program requires that projects in the long-range plan must be financially constrained or capable of being completed using revenue sources that are already committed or reasonably expected to be available in the future. He asked how the American Legion and I-270 project meets financial constraint, given the budget context in Maryland which includes an eight percent cut in state highway and operating. He said that Maryland has to remove all construction projects from the out years in the Maryland Capital Improvement Program and for flat funding of the local share of state gas tax.

Will Pines said that Maryland does have funding in the capital program as a whole. He said that Maryland has retained considerable funds to advance projects, including the I-270 and American Legion Bridge program, and preliminary engineering is moving forward.

Drew Morrison said that throughout the system and the plan there are projects that are large scale and will need a clear definition of what dollars look like to be ultimately implemented in phases, and MDSHA will work with the TPB staff on the constrained element of the long-range plan. He said that the project is a priority, and MDSHA will be working to align resources in coordination with Maryland delegates and other stakeholders.

Jessica Fitzwater said that she thinks that solutions to some I-270 challenges include bus rapid transit, expansion of the MARC Brunswick line, and possibly using more commuter buses. She said that the proposed Maryland Consolidated Transportation Plan has a 40 percent reduction in lost operating grants and 50 percent reduction in lost capital grants. She said it is difficult to hear some of the project solutions and see those as relieving I-270 challenges at the same time that local funding and state priorities are in conflict with each other.

Will Pines said that a goal of the engagement process is to look at options available associated with the transit. He stated that Maryland has a commitment to move forward with transit solutions through the corridor and is looking at BRT and commuter choice options to try to come up with a collection of options but recognizing that it has to be an affordable program. He said that all of the options mentioned may not happen at the same time, and there will need to be near-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions.

Drew Morrison said that MDSHA understands concerns regarding the short-term budget picture. He stated that the CTP continues the design and engineering program in as many places as possible.

### **C. WMATA Projects and Operations**

Allison Davis provided a status update on WMATA's submission to the Visualize 2050 plan. She said that Metro's ability to develop a 25-year capital investment that is tied to reasonably expected financial resources is complicated by lack of dedicated, reliable funding. She stated that the proposed 2025 budget includes significant service reduction, fare increases, and other elements.

Allison Davis said that despite limitations, WMATA remains on track to meet the process deadlines for the Visualize 2050 update. She stated that WMATA has a couple projects that are regionally significant that are currently underway and will probably merit inclusion in the future, but because Metro and the region has not agreed to how to fund the projects, WMATA is not submitting projects at this time.

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Allison Davis said that in early 2024 will be an additional opportunity for engagement on what is being proposed. She stated the once the WMATA board adopts the FY 2025 budget which will reflect service and fare changes, WMATA will be able to submit the service inputs for the technical evaluation.

## **11. ADJOURN**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 P.M. The next meeting will be on January 17, 2023.