
**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONTHLY REPORT TO THE TPB**

April 17, 2024
Ra Amin, CAC Chair

The April meeting of the CAC was held virtually on Thursday, April 11. The meeting featured a discussion with Kanti Srikanth, work planning for the CAC, and a brief discussion on safety and equity in a regional transportation context.

UPCOMING TPB AGENDA FOR APRIL 17, 2024

Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director, shared highlights of the TPB April agenda, including:

- Regional Bike-to-Work Day proclamation
- Approval of FY 2025 TLC Recipients
- Visualize 2050 Overview of Maryland Express Lane Projects
- Comments on Visualize 2050
- MDOT Carbon reduction program
- Climate pollution reduction grants

Member questions and comments included the following:

In regard to the comments received on Visualize 2050, members inquired how this comment period compared to similar efforts. For example, was 900 comments a good number or bad number? Ms. Erickson said that it is more than typically received due to the use of a MetroQuest comment form. There were also a number of email comments. This was a 30-day open period during which any member of the public could comment.

In regard to Bike-to-Work Day, members were interested in the overall participation pre- and post-pandemic. Ms. Erickson provided statistics, noting that 2017 was the highest participation rate so far with over 18,000 participants. In 2023, there were 15,000 participants.

DISCUSSION WITH KANTI SRIKANTH

Mr. Kanti Srikanth led a discussion framing the TPB's work, outlining the role the CAC plays regarding the TPB, and what activities there are on the horizon in which the CAC may engage or provide input. Mr. Srikanth also invited questions from CAC members on what is top of mind for them.

Mr. Srikanth began by outlining the relationship between COG and the TPB, explaining that COG doesn't expressly work on transportation planning. COG relies on the TPB, which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. There is a complementary relationship between the two, however, since many issues relate to each other. Mr. Srikanth gave the example of affordable housing, noting that land prices often drive people to live far from where they work, which impacts the transportation system.

Mr. Srikanth said sometimes solutions lie at the regional level. The TPB as a regional body comes together to look at the gaps and possible improvements in operation, the external factors driving the transportation system, and how those factors may influence choices jurisdictions make. However, many times the solution lies with the local jurisdictions. He said that the TPB helps local jurisdictions by providing data, for example, on transportation demand, and by identifying shared principles, such

as reducing congestion, bringing the jurisdictions together to concur on shared approaches. He used the example of the Commuter Connections program, noting these principles have been implemented since 1998. He also mentioned the TPB's Synthesized Policy Framework, a principles document that has linked all four of the TPB's policy documents into a single summary.

Mr. Srikanth concluded his remarks by encouraging the CAC to have informed discussions on the topics, supported by the staff, to develop a shared view, and to communicate that view with the TPB. He said that the CAC needs to be mindful of what is in the TPB wheelhouse. He noted that the TPB wants to hear from the CAC on any actions the TPB takes. In regard to how best to communicate with the TPB, he offered that it is something the CAC can decide, although formal resolutions while not required, may be adopted based on committee-wide discussion and representing the collective views of the members.

Member questions, comments and discussion included the following:

How does TPB intercede if not all the member jurisdictions share the TPB goals, for example, shared funding of WMATA? Kanti Srikanth answered that the TPB convenes leaders together. It's a consensus-based decision-making body. The TPB holds the forum so that these discussions can take place.

What is the relationship between regional forecasts, development of the long-range plan/TIP, and induced demand? The region continues to grow in population. Kanti Srikanth explained that the Cooperative Forecast projects growth out to a horizon year. These projections are derived from econometric modeling nationally and distributed to the DMV. In cooperation with the 25 jurisdictions, these forecasts are factored into land use and transportation plans, and filtered up into the regional plan.

How do express lanes reduce congestion when there are so many single-occupancy drivers? Kanti Srikanth answered that that the TPB does not have the resources to analyze every single project but conducts the conformity and performance analysis as set out in federal rules, which shows how well the projects are likely to perform at a regional level. Locally, the agencies proposing the projects are best positioned to identify the anticipated impacts based on the technical analysis most agencies perform for a project. In general, local agencies are answerable to the public using and experiencing the transportation system regarding the claims made on the impacts of a project.

when looking at I-66, there is a lot of existing land use in Northern Virginia that has grown horizontally instead of vertically, in other words, using up more land. Land prices are cheaper further away, but jobs are close-in, so travel on I-66 grows consistently. The HOV lanes were congested and enforcement proved challenging. VA chose to use HOT lanes as a solution. They are taking the funds from the tolls and reinvesting them back into the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which is providing express bus services on the toll lanes. These buses are now operating as an option. A CAC member noted that Northern Virginia's Commuter Choice program, using toll revenue from dynamically priced managed lanes, has reinvested over \$150 million since 2017. It supports 5 million trips, saves commuters nearly \$15 million in fuel expenses, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 70% relative to drive-alone travel.

What accountability exists for jurisdictional claims on project effects on pollution or traffic? Kanti Srikanth answered that jurisdictions need to follow the guidelines for conformity set out in the federal rules that apply to it.

What's the best way for the CAC to communicate with the TPB? Kanti Srikanth suggested that the TPB staff can share what data or analysis is available on a particular topic. With that information, the CAC can have an informed discussion, and try to reach a shared opinion to communicate to the TPB.

Zero emissions and greenhouse gasses (GHG): How is anything other than zero emissions acceptable? Kanti Srikanth responded that achieving GHG reductions from the transportation sector is difficult. There are lots of trade-offs among the measures available. TPB staff mentioned that there is a game under development that will be piloted to the Community Leadership Institute about this topic. A committee member offered that there are projects that could be implemented that would help, such as establishing HOT lanes between Maryland and Virginia.

LOOKING AHEAD: WORK PLANNING FOR THE CAC

CAC Chair, Ra Amin, led a work session on possible topics to frame out the CAC's meetings. There was discussion about the best way for the CAC to articulate its views on different policies. Members discussed various approaches. Ms. Bachle will look at the CAC archives to advise members about approaches taken in the past.

Committee members raised a number of possible topics, included the following:

- A meeting with DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT representatives.
- The new MWCOG-WMATA unified regional transit management initiative.
- Expanding bike lanes beyond the urban core, including Charles County.
- MARC through train service and an update on Union Station redevelopment.
- Collaboration with the National Park Service and other Federal landowners.
- Multimodal transportation, including first and last mile connections to transit.
- How we are getting word out about transit options.

CAC DISCUSSION. SAFETY, EQUITY

Members held a brief discussion about two of the TPB's "deep-dive" topics: safety and equity, including what safety might look like through an equity lens, and how might that translate into advice the CAC provides to the TPB. Nancy Ables shared an article she came across participating in the western Montgomery citizen advisory board. The article compares Bethesda to Wheaton in regard to local participation in transportation planning.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ra Amin, CAC Chair, thanked Kalli Krumpos for the opportunity to participate in the Older Adult Block Party in Alethia Tanner Park on April 21.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Ra Amin, Chair
Nancy Abeles
Timothy Davis
Christina Farver
Heather Gaona

Zach Israel
Kalli Krumpos
Larkin Turman
Bernie LoCascio
Daniel Papiernick
Jeff Parnes

Rick Rybeck
Gail Sullivan
Richard Wallace
Maribel Wong

Staff

Kanti Srikanth
Rachel Beyerle
Lyn Erickson

Janie Nahm
Sergio Ritacco
Andrew Meese
Leonardo Pineda

John Swanson
Laura Bachle