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**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

February 17, 2021

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Charles Allen, TPB Chair – DC Council  
Mark Rawlings – DC DOT  
Anna Chamberlin – DC DOT  
Kristin Calkins – DC Office of Planning  
Brooke Pinto – DC Council  
Christina Henderson – DC Council  
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT  
Adrian Boafo – Bowie  
Jason Growth – Charles County  
Reuben Collins – Charles County  
Patrick Wojahn – College Park  
Kai Hagen – Frederick County  
Mark Mishler – Frederick County  
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick  
David Edmondson – City of Frederick  
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg  
Emmet V. Jordan – Greenbelt  
Craig Moe – Laurel  
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive  
Evan Glass – Montgomery County Legislative  
Terry Bellamy – Prince George’s County Executive  
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive  
Deni Taveras – Prince George’s County Legislative  
Bridget Donnell Newton – Rockville  
Kacy Kostiuk – Takoma Park  
Norman Whitaker – Virginia DOT  
Maria Sinner – Virginia DOT  
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria  
Christian Dorsey – Arlington County  
Dan Malouff – Arlington county  
David Meyer – City of Fairfax  
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County  
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County  
Rodney Lusk – Fairfax County  
David Snyder – Falls Church  
Robert Brown – Loudoun County  
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County  
Pamela J. Sebesky – Manassas  
Jeannette Rishell – Manassas Park  
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County  
Victor Angry – Prince William County  
Shyam Kannan – WMATA  
Mark Phillips – WMATA  
Sandra Jackson – FHWA

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Dan Koenig – FTA  
Tammy Stidham – NPS

**MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT**

Kanti Srikanth  
Chuck Bean  
Lyn Erickson  
Mark Moran  
Tim Canan  
Nick Ramfos  
Tom Gates  
Bryan Hayes  
Sergio Ritacco  
John Swanson  
Abigail Zenner  
Deborah Etheridge  
Charlene Howard  
Dusan Vuksan  
Arianna Koudounas  
Karen Armendariz  
Jen Desimone  
Stacy Cook

Elisa Walton – CAC  
Ella Hanson – DC Staff for Brook Pinto  
Olivia Saucier – ICF  
Heather Driscoll – ICF  
Randy ZuWallack – ICF

Materials referenced in the minutes can be found here:  
[mwcog.org/events/2021/2/17/transportation-planning-/board/](http://mwcog.org/events/2021/2/17/transportation-planning-/board/)

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

Vice-Chair Sebesky called the meeting to order and reminded the board that the meeting is being recorded and broadcast. She said the process for asking questions and voting is the same as past meetings. After each item members will be asked to comment or vote by jurisdiction.

Ms. Erickson conducted a roll call. Members that were present are listed on the first page of the minutes.

Vice-Chair Sebesky said that there was no comment from the public.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 21, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Newton made a motion to approve the minutes from the January TPB meeting.

Ms. Russell seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by the board.

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

Mr. Groth said that the Technical Committee met on February 5. At the meeting the committee was briefed on and discussed a number of items, including three items on the TPB agenda. He said the committee was briefed on the 2030 Climate and Energy Action plan, the Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021, and a resiliency study. He said the committee was also briefed on the COVID-19 impacts on TPB Enhanced Mobility grantees. More detail can be found in the Technical Committee Report.

### **4. CAC AND AFA REPORTS**

Ms. Walton said that the Community Advisory Committee met on February 11. She said that this was the first meeting of the 2021-2022 committee. She said committee priorities for the two-year term include equity, safety, sustainability, transportation technology, and advancement of the Aspirational Initiatives. She said that TPB Chair Allen addressed the committee. She said that the committee was also briefed on the Regional Travel Survey. More detail can be found in the CAC Report.

Ms. Kostiuk said she is excited about the joint CAC and AFA Visualize 2045 focus group scheduled for February 25.

Mr. Aguirre said that the Access for All Advisory Committee met on February 12. He said that this is the first meeting he chaired for the committee. He said that the committee was briefed on findings from the Voices of the Region survey. He said that one focus group was conducted in Spanish, but the AFA encourages staff to explore ways to incorporate more input from people who speak other languages and people who represent communities with disabilities. He said the committee was briefed on the COVID-19 impacts on people who use programs funded through the TPB's Enhanced Mobility program. More detail can be found in the AFA report.

### **5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Srikanth said that the Steering Committee met on February 5. He said that committee actions are documented on pages 2 to 9 of his report. He said that on page 8 is a letter approved by the committee. This letter from the TPB and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee formally submitting comments to the U.S. EPA on the agencies proposed review and reevaluation of a 1986 policy related to the use of catalytic converters in automobiles. He said that the TPB is currently soliciting applications for the Transportation Land-Use Connections Program and for technical assistance for roadway safety. Details are on a page 12. He said that this morning a letter was added to the report that was received from the MDOT. The letter provides the board an update of Maryland's I-495/I-270 management project. It specifically notes that on January 27, the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland State Highway Administration released a recommended preferred alternative design for the express lanes project. He described the substantive changes relative to the project as reflected in the current edition of Visualize 2045. He noted these changes would be part of the update to Visualize 2045 that the TPB has begun and the board will be asked to review and approve in June. He said MDOT's letter, along with a fact sheet and press release, is posted to the TPB meeting materials website.

Mr. Srikanth said that on February 12 the TPB stopped accepting projects and changes to be included in the air-quality conformity analysis for Visualize 2045. He said that staff is reviewing the paperwork that was submitted. He said the proposed changes will be released for public comment in early April and that the board will be asked to approve these projects at the May board meeting.

More details can be found in the report for this item.

Ms. Kostiuk asked about the review of the project mentioned in the MDOT letter. She asked if the updated MDOT plan would come forward to the board for review and approval as a separate process or as part of the larger set of things that are submitted for updating the long-range plan Visualize 2045.

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Mr. Srikanth said that MDOT's updates to the I-495/I-270 Express lanes project would be part of the larger set of updates the board will be asked to review and approve in June. He said that before the updated Visualize 2045 plan can be approved by federal partners, the TPB needs to conduct the air-quality conformity analysis. He said that in June the board will be approving the projects that are included in the air-quality conformity analysis. He said that staff are also conducting a financial analysis to show that the region can afford to pay for projects that will be included in the analyses and the plan.

Ms. Kostiuk asked how the climate impacts of the updated long-range plan will be analyzed differently that in the past.

Mr. Srikanth said that in the past TPB's work on climate change has been separate from its long-range plan document. This time when the board adopts its updated long range plan document in April/May of next year, the findings from the climate mitigation study and the levels of outcomes needed within transportation sector to achieve the region's greenhouse gas reduction goals will all be integrated into and a part of the long-range plan. We are striving to complete the study by end of this year. He said that the focus on mitigating climate change in the forthcoming update to Visualize 2045 will be part of a larger package of policies, which also includes the Aspirational Initiatives and a focus on safety.

Mr. Srikanth also noted that the TPB's focus on climate is not new to this latest plan update. He said that TPB analysis related to climate change began in 2009 and said TPB has received estimates of changes to greenhouse gases every time it updates its long-range plan since at least 2014. He noted that we do see that over the long 25-year period greenhouse gases are forecast to go down, but not at the rate of the region's greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Ms. Kostiuk said that as the board moves forward it is important to think about how it can utilize the information that Mr. Srikanth described as it considers projects whether they really are meeting our goals as well, and if there's more we can do on that.

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

Chair Allen said that as 2021 progresses, the region will become more active as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that steps taken by local governments in the region will significantly shape what recovery looks like. He said it is important to prioritize a more equitable transportation system across the region. He said that limited mobility during the pandemic highlights opportunities for reducing future congestion and emissions while offering residents more options for moving around. He said that the pandemic has also highlighted areas where the region can do much better in terms of planning to be resilient and meet the travel needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, while ensuring equitable access to transportation technology and opportunities to telework. He said he counts on the board to stay engaged and find effective ways for the TPB to assist the jurisdictions as they prepare to recover from the pandemic.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **7. BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT FY 2022 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM**

Ms. Erickson referred to the presentation and materials on the UPWP. She reviewed the budget for the year including revenues and expenditures. She also reviewed the carryover funds from the previous year.

Mr. Snyder suggested that future presentations on the UPWP might be done in a thematic way.

Ms. Erickson explained that because of the nature of MPO work many of these work programs intersect and work together but that she would look into that suggestion for the future.

Mr. Lewis asked about the tables showing revenues. He noted that there were different amounts for Virginia Maryland and the District of Columbia.

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Ms. Erickson explained that each state has its own formula to determine its allocation.

Mr. Allen asked in the event that you had to make any mid-year adjustments based on congressional action of funding, is that something that'll be brought back to TPB to do a mid-year adjustment to the budget? Or do you have enough budgetary flexibility, working with partners, to make that change?.

Ms. Erickson said that we have enough budgetary flexibility to make changes. She said that she does not anticipate the TPB getting additional money from major changes to the FHWA PL or FTA 5303 funding.

Mr. Srikanth explained that should a new federal funding program be established as part of federal reauthorization, such as grants for infrastructure projects, we would be able to work with transportation departments to apply for such funds and make adjustments to the work program if needed.

## **8. BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT FY 2022 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM**

Mr. Ramfos referred to the presentation and gave an in-depth overview of the work Commuter Connections does and its budget and work program.

Mr. Lewis thanked Commuter Connections for its great work.

Ms. Taveras asked about some acronyms and specifically GRH.

Mr. Ramfos explained that GRH is Guaranteed Ride Home.

Ms. Kostiuik asked about the impact of COVID-19 on Commuter Connection's outreach activities and changes in behavior.

Mr. Ramfos explained that Commuter Connections is moving into an education campaign to help through the recovery. He explained that the focus will be on educating commuters on transit and carpool options as people begin to go back to offices.

## **9. VISUALIZE 2045 - "VOICES OF THE REGION" PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS**

Ms. Armendariz explained that TPB staff began its public engagement efforts for the update to Visualize 2045 with a public opinion research phase. She said that the public opinion research phase is made up of a statistically significant region-wide survey, known as Voices of the Region, and 11 focus groups that will supplement the survey's data and methodology. She said that transportation officials can use the survey results as quantitative support for any projects, plans, or programs that align with the TPB's policy priority areas. She referred to Ms. Saucier from ICF for a briefing of the survey.

Ms. Saucier said that the survey was conducted from September to November 2020. She explained that the 2,407 completed responses exceeded the goal of getting 2,000 completed surveys. She said that the three primary topics of the survey were travel patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic, transportation improvements, and factors that affect transportation such as climate change and equity. She proceeded to share the survey results with the board. More details can be found on the presentation slides for Item 9.

Mr. Walkinshaw asked Ms. Saucier to clarify the category of "emerging technology" from the analysis of the open-ended question at the end of the survey.

Ms. Saucier said that the emerging technology category includes any respondent reference to e-bikes, e-scooters, and drones.

Ms. Kostiuik asked if there had been any cross-tabulations based on race and ethnicity. She also asked how this data can be utilized as TPB members begin to get ready for the update to the long-range plan.

Ms. Saucier referred back to her presentation to show the demographics of the survey relative to census information. She said that cross-tabulation was done by racial and ethnic background, but that there were not a lot of significant findings from these cross-tabulations. She said that there were more

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differences based on income status in various questions including the one about system satisfaction.

Mr. Srikanth said that this survey was conducted to provide a regional snapshot of public opinion and expectations, particularly based on their experience during the pandemic. He said that TPB members can refer to the survey as they make decisions on transportation priorities and investments.

Mr. Wojahn said that he would want to see more information about cross-tabulations based on race and income. He asked if the survey asked questions about biking and walking for non-transportation purposes.

Ms. Saucier said that the survey asked information about general travel. It did not ask specific questions about biking or walking for exercise.

Mr. Kannan said that Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is already delivering many of the public transportation services, which respondents specified as needing in order to feel safe while using public transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic and onward. Mr. Kannan said that 50% of the region's workforce cannot work from home. He said that officials need to continue to pay attention to people who continue to commute and those who need to take non-work trips.

## **10. PRIORITY AIRPORT GROUND ACCESS PROJECTS**

This item was postponed to the March TPB meeting.

## **11. CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021 (CRSAA)**

Mr. Ramfos referenced a notice that was distributed to the board providing background information on the \$590,000 that the region was allocated as part of the CRSAA funding. He said that the purpose of the funding is to support eligible Enhanced Mobility recipients for payroll and operational needs. He said that the funds can also be used to transport individuals to and from vaccination sites. He said that the last page of the notice included proposed eligibility criteria. He said that FTA concurs with those criteria.

Mr. Ramfos said that the next step would be a streamlined solicitation and application process. The goal is to get it out as quickly as possible to current and former Enhanced Mobility grantees. He said that the board will be kept informed as this process moves forward. More detail can be found in the notice for this item.

Mr. Bellamy asked if it can be used to transport people to vaccination centers in suburban Maryland.

Mr. Ramfos said that as long as individuals are being transported to and from vaccination sites this funding can be used.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

## **12. ADJOURN**

No other business was brought to the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.