



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director  
**SUBJECT:** Public Comment for the January 2022 TPB Meeting  
**DATE:** January 19, 2022

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The Transportation Planning Board accepts public comment on a rolling basis. Comments can be submitted via email ([tpbcomment@mwkog.org](mailto:tpbcomment@mwkog.org)), online ([mwkog.org/tpbcomment](http://mwkog.org/tpbcomment)), and phone. Comments are collected until noon on the Tuesday before the TPB meeting. These comments are compiled and shared with the board at the meeting the following day.

Between the December 2021 TPB meeting and noon on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, the TPB received 2 comments. All comments were submitted via email.

The comments are summarized below. All full comments are attached to this memo.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### **Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth – Email – January 18, 2022**

Schwartz submitted a letter to be included in the meeting materials for the January TPB meeting. The letter urged the board to move forward with specific actions to implement the TPB climate resolution adopted by the TPB in June and July 2021. Three recommended actions are to allocate resources in the FY 2023 UPWP for follow-on development of actionable regional climate strategies; to allocate UPWP resources to fulfill TPB direction on the next long-range transportation plan update; and to set performance targets for reducing per capita VMT and increasing EV adoption in Visualize 2045.

#### **Arlene Montemarano – Email – January 13, 2022**

Montemarano sent an editorial from The Free-Lance Star, a Fredericksburg area newspaper, about the cars isolated on I-95 during a recent snowstorm. Montemarano included a comment that the impacts of the snowstorm would be minimized if HOT lanes weren't operated by a private company.

January 18, 2022

Hon. Pamela J. Sebesky  
Chair, Transportation Planning Board

Re: Action steps for the 2021 TPB Climate Resolution

Chair Sebesky and TPB Board members:

We urge the TPB to adopt and move forward with specific actions to implement the TPB climate resolution adopted in June and July of 2021:

Adopted by votes of TPB board on June 16 and on July 21:

*WHEREAS, the TPB, upon completion of its 2022 update of Visualize 2045, will initiate an interim update to the Long-Range Transportation Plan with a target completion date of 2024, and the interim update will include the consideration of multiple build scenarios and an analysis of each scenario's impact on the region's adopted goals and targets, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and will be based on the concept of 'zero-based budgeting' where all projects, including those currently included in the Plan, must be resubmitted for consideration in such Plan, provided that projects currently under construction or currently funded with federal, state, regional, local or private funds shall be exempt from such requirement.*

This week's TPB meeting will feature an important discussion on how TPB will take next steps based on what it learned from the Climate Change Mitigation Study (CCMS). CSG respectfully asks TPB to action steps under the following agenda items:

- **For Agenda Item #9 UPWP we request that you allocate resources in the FY23 UPWP for follow-on development of actionable regional climate strategies. We ask that you take the next steps toward adopting strategies identified in the climate study – ex. VMT fee; parking pricing; congestion pricing of existing lanes.** We were pleased to hear that the TPB has proposed a process to identify key climate strategies from the CCMS as principles to guide Visualize 2045. However, the TPB should adopt actionable climate strategies in FY23. We need a shared commitment to regional goals, programs and policies in addition to local projects to move forward the necessary mix of emissions reduction strategies.
- **Also, in Agenda Item #9 UPWP we request that you allocate resources in the UPWP to fulfill TPB board July 2021 direction for the next long-range plan update -** The TPB voted to do an early plan update, which will start in 2022 for adoption in 2024, and the update will involve more in-depth scenario analysis of transportation project packages relative to climate targets and zero-based budgeting. This will take more

resources than the current Visualize 2045 update and we request that you allocate the required funding in your FY23 UPWP budget.

- **For Agenda Item #10 Visualize 2045 and #11 Consideration of Climate Goals we request that you set performance targets for reducing per capita VMT and increasing EV adoption in Visualize 2045.** We concur with your proposal for adopting explicit GHG reduction goals for the multimodal on-road transportation sector and specific strategies. However, in accordance with the discussions over the past year, we request that you also set specific performance goals in Visualize 2045 for reducing per capita VMT and increasing EV adoption. Visualize 2045 in the past has tracked VMT but has not stated any desired outcome that the plan should aim to achieve. *Region Forward* and many (if not most) TPB jurisdictions have included goals to reduce VMT and/or increase non-auto mode share. The COG climate plan and several jurisdictions have also set goals for EV adoption. The CCMS provides clear guidance for what these targets need to be. The CCMS scenarios that achieved the on-road transportation emission reductions in the COG 2030 climate plan included:
  - Reducing per capita VMT by 15-20% by 2030, *and*
  - Achieving EV adoption equal to the Biden Administration goal of 50% of sales or higher by 2030

Thank you for your dedication to fighting climate change and creating a better, more equitable transportation system.

Sincerely,

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director

Bill Pugh  
Senior Policy Fellow

## TPB Comment

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**From:** Arlene <mikarlgm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 11:20 AM  
**Subject:** Monday's Storm Debacle in Virginia .. And Transurban's role in it.  
**Categories:** Green category

Might have been a different story, (with a lot less suffering and fear), if the toll lanes still belonged to the public.

As for Maryland, if Hogan is allowed get what he wants, we may find ourselves SOL having to depend on the kindness of Transurban.

(Thanks so much to Jeremy Mohler, journalist from In The Public Interest, for finding and sharing this article. Although the TWO DAY ordeal was certainly well covered, the issue of the unused Transurban lanes has been somehow ignored by most larger media here.)

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[https://fredericksburg.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-interstate-95-winter-storm-debacle-demands-scrutiny/article\\_f8cb0eb7-2da3-5a46-bf6c-579331426b2f.html](https://fredericksburg.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-interstate-95-winter-storm-debacle-demands-scrutiny/article_f8cb0eb7-2da3-5a46-bf6c-579331426b2f.html)

THAT TRAFFIC in the Fredericksburg area along Interstate 95 is bad is hardly news to the people who live here.

It's also well-known to groups that study congestion issues nationally. A study by INRIX just four years ago, for example, listed the I-95 stretch from Exit 133A in Stafford to Fairfax County as the "most congested" in the country.

The complete stoppage of traffic late Monday night into Tuesday, however, was certainly extraordinary, even for this area. To say that the region was caught off guard, however, doesn't pass the smell test.

That was Gov. Ralph Northam's assessment during a press call on Tuesday afternoon. "We were prepared for the storm that was predicted, a few inches of snow," he

said. “But instead, Mother Nature sent more than a foot of snow to the Fredericksburg area.”

Let’s begin with the obvious. The governor said that “a few inches of snow” were predicted. One wonders where he’s getting his information from. A press release from the Virginia Department of Transportation on Sunday, Jan. 2, warned of a major snow event. “The current forecast indicates this will be a significant event that will impact travel throughout the state. Snowfall could reach rates of two inches per hour.”

Also on Sunday, the Washington Post’s Capital Weather Gang, which depends on multiple forecasting models for their predictions, flagged our region for 5 to 9 inches of snow, with a possible maximum fall of 14 inches.

Failure to recognize the potential danger of this storm is one possible reason the Virginia National Guard wasn’t mobilized. The state’s coordinator of emergency management, Curtis Brown, said the Guard—which takes 12 to 24 hours to call up—wasn’t activated because the situation didn’t meet the state’s general rules for pre-emptive emergency declarations for winter storms.

We reached out to the Fredericksburg Division of VDOT asking what weather conditions were expected. That call has been referred to the central office for response, and as of now has not been answered.

Failing to understand the storm’s magnitude appears to be just the first of many missteps by our state leaders.

Motorists who were stranded for hours reported receiving very little official communication about what was happening or how long they could expect to be stuck. Travelers complained that calls to VDOT went unanswered, and that the 511 system provided little information beyond there being icy conditions.

When official communication finally did come, it was too little, too late. At 8:45 Tuesday morning—a full 24 hours from when state troopers first responded to a jackknifed tractor trailer on the interstate near

Fredericksburg—the governor tweeted that “My team has been working throughout the night alongside @VSPPIO, @VaDOT, and @VDEM to respond to the situation on I-95.” That’s little consolation to families who had stayed overnight in freezing temperatures with no food or water.

**Transurban, the company that owns the I-95 hot lanes, is also facing criticism. When asked by WJLA TV about why traffic wasn’t allowed on the lanes, it responded, reasonably, that the lanes were being used for snow plows and first responders. Adding southbound traffic would only complicate a bad situation.**

**Pushed to explain why traffic couldn’t be allowed to travel north on the lanes to get away from the situation, Transurban had no immediate response.**

Rep. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia’s 7th District is among a growing list of local, regional and national leaders calling on the outgoing Northam administration and the incoming Youngkin administration to work together to do a deep dive into everything that went wrong.

It’s important that this not result in yet another report posted on government websites that leads to no significant change. While Monday’s snow event may have been fueled by a “perfect storm” that created a 48-mile stretch of stalled and stopped traffic that left even Virginia’s junior U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine stranded in excess of 20 hours, it wasn’t an event we couldn’t see coming.

Fortunately, there were no deaths or serious injuries to those stuck in the debacle that was the area’s response to the situation.

Next time—and on Interstate 95, there will be a next time—drivers and their passengers may not be so fortunate.

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Arlene Montemarano, 240-360-8691, Lawndale Drive

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