

**ITEM 8 – Action
May 15, 2024**

Visualize 2050: Approval of the Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Which Includes Projects Submitted for Analysis

Action: Adopt Resolution R12-2024 to approve the scope of work for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP, including the list of project submissions for analysis.

Background: Item 8A: Approval of the Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects submitted for analysis.

UPDATE AS OF 5-14-24:

There has been new language for the resolution proposed as highlighted in yellow in the resolution packet. Attachment 1 (MDOT letter) has been added and a new Attachment 2 (VDOT letter) is also included; original attachments 2-4 are renumbered 3-5.

Following the TPB approved Visualize 2050 development schedule, the TPB this month is asked to take the first of two key actions. The first is the Board will vote this month on the approval of the air quality conformity analysis scope of work including regionally significant projects to proceed with the required federal air quality conformity analysis. Over the last 17 months, these projects underwent a thorough review by the TPB member agencies (sponsor agency) assisted by TPB staff, two public comment periods, and

several TPB meetings/work sessions. TPB member agencies have proposed these projects for inclusion in Visualize 2050 because of their anticipated value towards achieving the National Capital Region's desired future transportation system.

The second Board action is adoption of Visualize 2050 Plan and FY 2026-2029 TIP, upon completion of the air quality conformity and system performance analysis, and is scheduled for June 2025 including all the remaining project inputs that are not part of the air quality conformity analysis.

Item 8B: Supplemental Information to Support Board Action on Resolution R12-2024

UPDATE AS OF 5-14-24: The MDOT letter from May 14, 2024 has been included.

Staff reviews information on letters received from agencies, edits made to the Air Quality Conformity Inputs Table since the April 17, 2024 TPB meeting and other information to support Board action on Resolution R12-2024 in Item 8A.

ATTACHMENTS

- Item 8A – **Updated on 5-14-24 - Attachment 1 (MDOT letter) has been added and a new Attachment 2 (VDOT letter) is also included with new language highlighted in yellow; original attachments 2-4 are now 3-5.** Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP Air Quality Conformity Analysis Scope of Work Approval Package
- Item 8B – **Updated on 5-14-24 to include the MDOT letter** Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP Supplemental Information
- Item 8 – Visualize 2050 Air Quality Conformity Scope of Work Approval Presentation



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Board
FROM: Cristina Finch, Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Approval of the Scope of Work for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects submitted for analysis
DATE: May 14, 2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide supplemental information on the resolution that the Board will be asked to approve at this meeting as part of Item 8A. This includes updated information on the technical inputs since the last Board meeting to be included in the regional air quality conformity analysis of the next National Capital Region Transportation Plan, Visualize 2050, and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- **Resolution R12-2024** includes a letter from Maryland DOT (R12-2024 Attachment 1) and transit commitments from Maryland in response to past resolutions R2-2022 and R15-2022 which are also included (R12-2024 Attachment 4)
- **Air Quality Conformity Analysis Scope of Work** provides additional technical information to be used and outlines the work tasks to be performed in the analysis including the COG-approved Cooperative Forecasts Round 10 tables. (Resolution R12-2024 Attachment 2)
- **Air Quality Conformity Network Input Tables** reflect every regionally significant for air quality project that will be analyzed. The table identifies (1) in pink changes since the end of the public comment period (March 30, 2024) and reflects response to comments and technical corrections; (2) in blue/strikethrough highlight projects from Visualize 2045 that are being withdrawn (i.e. deletions); and (3) in yellow highlight projects that are either newly proposed for inclusion in Visualize 2050 or changes to some aspect of a project that is in Visualize 2045. *This list does not include ongoing/candidate projects that are not regionally significant for air quality.* (Resolution R12-2024 Attachment 3)

Supplementary Information:

- Two letters from Virginia DOT on the Southside Express Lanes project
- One letter from Maryland DOT requesting removal of an I-495 express lanes study from the Air Quality Conformity Network Input Table and providing information about the American Legion Bridge plus I-270 Program

UPDATES TO THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS CONFORMITY TABLE AND SCOPE OF WORK

Since the publishing of the Air Quality Conformity Inputs Table for the April TPB meeting, TPB staff received more feedback from agency staff that prompted the following additional edits:

1. Shellhorn Road Extension (row 540) – Facility was Williamson Blvd, should be Sterling Blvd
2. James Madison Highway Overpass Widening (rows 421-422) – row 421 was listed and should be removed, row 422 completion date was 2030, should be 2038
3. I-495 Toll Lanes (row 204) – should be clarified in the To limit adding “(including access/egress ramps eastward on the Beltway toward MD 187)”
4. I-495 Toll Lanes (rows 205-210) – study, not coded, from I-270Y – western spur to the Potomac River should be removed completely from the table
5. I-495 Southside Express Lanes (row 373 / 373a) – row 373a which had been added for the April meeting materials to show more detail in number of lanes for a small section of the project has been removed; row 373 is as it was originally in the March meeting materials, with 2 express lanes in each direction, has been restored.
6. Randolph Rd BRT, North Bethesda Transitway BRT, and New Hampshire Avenue New BRT Expansion from Colesville Park and Ride to Fort Totten Metro Station (Transit, Rows 23, 24, and 27) – were listed in the April meeting materials as study/not coded, and should be listed as Implement as originally listed in the March meeting materials. Additionally, the completion year for all three BRT projects should be 2045.

SCHEDULE

The Visualize 2050 development process has completed the second of three public comment opportunities. Key upcoming dates:

May	The TPB will take a key vote in the planning process on May 15, 2024, which will enable the continuation of modeling and conformity analysis work. Agencies submit any remaining non-regionally significant for air quality projects into the PIT by June 28, 2024.
Summer	TPB staff work with TPB member agencies on other projects, programs not significant for air quality conformity analysis
Fall	TPB staff finalize the complete financial plan for Visualize 2050 (including Operations, Maintenance/State of Good Repair), full project list and analyze takeaways for Visualize 2050
Winter	Finalize conformity analysis, draft Visualize 2050 plan and FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program
April 2025	TPB review analysis results, draft plan and FY 2026-2029 TIP; Public Comment Period
June 2025	TPB action to approve the results of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and adoption of Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program

ATTACHMENTS

1. Virginia DOT April 30, 2024 letter on I-495 Southside Express Lanes project
2. Virginia DOT May 7, 2024 letter in response to questions on I-495 Southside Express Lanes project
3. Maryland DOT May 14, 2024 letter on 495 “East” Study, ALB+270 Program, and Southern Maryland Rapid Transit



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner

1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Christina Henderson, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study

Dear Chair Henderson:

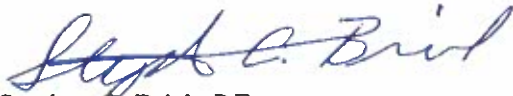
The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) continues to value the partnership with the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) as we collectively seek to update the Visualize 2050 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). The efforts and collaboration amongst TPB and its member states, jurisdictions, legislative representatives, and regional authorities is critical to the support of regionally significant projects. As you are aware, project submissions for Visualize 2050 by VDOT include the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project. This critical project seeks to develop a multimodal solution with a goal of moving the most people as efficiently as possible through this congested segment of the Capital Beltway. The project presents the opportunity to create and expand transit connections within the region while also providing congestion relief and increased travel reliability. The project is consistent with the TPB's adopted goals for the development of Visualize 2050, specifically through its objective to reduce travel times for transit services and the free use of the express lanes network by these services and other high occupancy vehicles.

Over the last several months, we have heard concerns regarding the preservation of space on the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge (WWMB) for future rail transit. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study completed in 2000 delineated the inside lanes of the bridge for future rail transit and its ensuing Record of Decision memorialized this requirement. I am writing to clearly state that VDOT is fully supportive of future rail transit over the WWMB and as such is continuing to pursue rail preservation by advancing alternatives that can be pursued in the near term while including flexibility for the long term, are cost effective, and can be built largely within the footprint of the existing corridor. The concepts under NEPA review incorporate rail preservation either through retaining existing, unoccupied space or by incorporating a commitment to convert necessary space to rail transit in the future when Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the region are positioned to implement service across the WWMB. Incorporating this commitment as part of the NEPA process and its ultimate federal approval means this requirement is legally enforceable. VDOT's adherence to this requirement will not result in costs for WMATA to convert the space when they are ready to implement service. Further, VDOT has stated, and I reiterate, that terms within any future contract or concessionaire agreement would similarly incorporate a requirement for conversion to rail transit in the future consistent with the preferred alternative approved through the NEPA process. This means a future agreement would make clear the need for the concessionaire to vacate the space necessary to operate heavy rail.

The Honorable Christina Henderson
April 30, 2024
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Regarding transit investments, it has been the practice of the Commonwealth to incorporate on-going transit payments from express lane projects in Northern Virginia to enhance multimodal options in the respective corridor. It is VDOT's intent to continue the advocacy for our established practice with this project. However, since this project is still at preliminary stages, we are not able to identify the amount nor the nature of funding for transit investments in the corridor at this time. To underscore the Commonwealth's commitment to this approach, it is worth noting that since 2017 VDOT alone and in conjunction with our express lane partners have provided \$156 million to the Commuter Choice Program which has been used to fund park and ride lots, bus purchases, shared use paths, and transit stations.

In closing, we understand the importance of future rail transit on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and are committed to ensuring the space will be available. I hope you will continue to support the Commonwealth's efforts to solve the region's most challenging congestion in the near term while also retaining the flexibility necessary to adjust our problem-solving approaches in the future.
Sincerely,



Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner of Highways

- C: The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller, III, Secretary of Transportation
 Mr. Kanti Srikanth, TPB, Executive Director
 Ms. Cathy McGhee, P.E., VDOT, Chief Deputy Commissioner
 Ms. Angel Deem, VDOT, Chief of Policy
 Mr. Bill Cuttler, P.E., VDOT-NoVA, District Engineer
 Ms. Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT-NoVA, ADA Planning and Investment



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner

1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

May 7, 2024

The Honorable Christina Henderson, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: VDOT Response to Prince George's County Questions on I-495 SEL Project

Dear Chair Henderson,

At the April 17th TPB Board Meeting, VDOT received four questions from Prince George's County on the Commonwealth's submission of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project for Visualize2050. As requested, this letter is a response to the following questions asked by fellow TPB member, Victor Weissburg, Prince George's County at the meeting.

Q1. Has a timeline on implementing the bus plan from the DRPT Study with phasing connected to milestones and funding been established?

A1. The DPRT study was completed in April 2023. The study identified near-, mid- and long-term recommendations. Next steps in advancing the study included identifying potential funding sources and securing funding. For more information reference the following link. <https://drpt.virginia.gov/studies-and-reports/i-495-southside-transit-tdm-study/>

Q2. How will a transfer to rail from HOT when that project is advanced be executed, especially given the nature of long term P3 contracts?

A2. During the procurement and events leading up to the execution of an agreement, the private operator will be fully aware of the future rail expansion plans. Specific language can be included in a comprehensive agreement (CA) regarding preservation of future rail and failure to adhere to the requirements of the comprehensive agreement by the private operator could result in breach of contract and default. An example of such language was included in the Transform 66, Outside the Beltway CA regarding expansion of the Orange Line.

Section 12.05 Alternative Facilities

(b) Orange Line Expansion. The opening of the Orange Line for operations within the I-66 Corridor encompassing the Express Lanes within the 10 years following the Agreement Year in which the Project Completion Date occurs will be considered an Alternative Facility.

The Honorable Christina Henderson
May 7, 2024

Exhibit B-1

Preservation of a minimum of 42-foot median for future transit use as graphically depicted in the RFP Conceptual Plans

Q3. We need a clearer and stronger understanding of how travel from locations east of MD 210 will not be significantly adversely impacted?

A3. Preliminary traffic analysis for the project is underway. A detailed traffic analysis will be completed as the NEPA study progresses. Travel westbound into Virginia would have access to Express Lanes or the same number of general-purpose lanes as exist today. This would provide enhanced travel choice and travel time reliability, both in single occupancy vehicles, carpools, or bus transit.

Q4. What are the benefits to Prince George's County of having HOT lanes on this portion of the Beltway? We have not heard those fully articulated.

A4. The project benefits are the following:

- The express lanes in Northern Virginia are achieving the Commonwealth's primary goal of moving more people through a very busy, and unpredictable region, while providing improved travel reliability and enhanced transit options in a cost-effective manner.
- The 495 Southside Study is evaluating expansion of express lane to provide system continuity, additional travel choices, reduction of congestion, improvement in travel reliability and safety along with evaluating consistency with local and regional plans.
- While the express lanes provide a reliable option for single-occupant vehicles, they also encourage and benefit buses and carpools, by providing toll-free access to the express lanes, and the benefit of a faster and more reliable trip.
- The project will also benefit travelers in the "free" or general-purpose lane as a result of trips diverted to the express lanes.
- The project is anticipated to provide benefits consistent with other express lane projects in the region.
 - On the 495/395/95 Express Lanes, there are approximately 11,000 carpool (HOV-3+) trips daily. In the last year, 48% of total trips were carpools. On 66 Express Inside and Outside the Beltway approximately 7,550 and 7,330 daily trips respectively were carpools.
 - The 495/395/95 carries approximately 1,200 bus trips each weekday and the 66 Express Lanes Outside the Beltway carries an average of 1,400 bus trips each weekday further reducing congestion in the general-purpose lanes on these interstates.
 - Express lane projects have also supported transit investments such as through the Commuter Choice Program. Since 2017, this program has received \$156 million which has funded 42 buses, 29 bus service improvements, 14 new express bus routes, 6 commuter incentive programs, 4 rail station enhancements, 3 park and ride lots, and 1 BRT line.

Thank you for providing us an opportunity to respond to Mr. Weissburg's questions. Representatives from VDOT will be available to follow-up as needed with any additional concerns expressed from any TPB member regarding the submission of any of the Commonwealth's projects for Visualize2050.

Sincerely,



Bill Cuttler, P.E.
Northern Virginia District Engineer

The Honorable Christina Henderson
May 7, 2024

Cc: Ms. Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT-NoVA
Ms. Michelle Shropshire, P.E., DBIA, VDOT-NoVA
Mr. Amir Shahpar, P.E., VDOT-NoVA
Mr. Kanti Srikanth, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Mr. Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County

May 14, 2024

The Honorable Christina Henderson
Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington DC 20002

Dear Chair Henderson:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) requests that certain changes be made to the project inputs and the conformity tables in the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Long Range Transportation Plan, Visualize 2050, reflecting feedback from Maryland member jurisdictions and the public. We also wanted to provide an update on coordination with the City of Rockville and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and additional context on the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project in Charles and Prince George's Counties.

495 "East" Study

The MDOT is removing CE1182, the I-495 Toll Lanes Study from the I-270Y (Western Spur) to the Potomac River (Woodrow Wilson Bridge), which is listed in the conformity input tables. Portions of this segment were removed from the MDOT's construction program during the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) process, and since it has no funding in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) nor in Visualize 2045, we are removing it from the list of studies proposed to be studied in Visualize 2050.

ALB+270 Program

Since the April 2024 TPB meeting, MDOT has coordinated further with MCDOT and the City of Rockville. Under the Moore-Miller Administration, MDOT has appreciated the coordination with MCDOT on the ALB+270 Program, including the County Executive and Council's support for MDOT's grant requests for the section of project currently being advanced in design. In our coordination following the April meeting, Montgomery County and MDOT reaffirmed their shared commitment for the implementation of the program in a manner that advances transit along the corridor. In coordination with Montgomery County, MDOT will support a resolution at the May meeting that reaffirms the transit commitments in TPB Resolutions R2-2022 and R15-2022 that were associated with the replacement of the American Legion Bridge and

widening of I-495 and I-270 in Visualize 2045 considering a certain scope, phasing, and project delivery methodology.

MDOT is committed to working with Montgomery County toward a more defined strategy to advance the project and these commitments before approval of Visualize 2050. MDOT has provided this resolution language to TPB staff for inclusion in the base resolution for the May 15, 2024 meeting.

The MDOT understands the City of Rockville's concerns about the Selected Alternative and their desire to remove the section of I-270 from Westlake Terrace to I-370 from Visualize 2050. As MDOT discussed in the April TPB meeting and in follow up with the City, MDOT is advancing design work for I-495 from the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the I-270 West Spur and on the I-270 West Spur from I-495 to north of Westlake Terrace and pursuing federal grants for construction. Meanwhile, MDOT plans to begin a NEPA study and associated planning for I-270 North (I-370 to I-70) later this year. No active design or planning activity related to the Selected Alternative is occurring between Westlake Terrace and I-370 on I-270 at this time nor is it planned to be advanced by this Administration as we focus on sections to the south and north.

At such time that design activities may start for this section, MDOT commits to engage with Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, and Rockville regarding the path forward. Mitigation requirements and commitments for the section, including sound barriers and transit investments, will be advanced as part of that engagement. MDOT will also evaluate the effects related to the phasing of potential improvements. MDOT will complete this engagement and evaluation prior to any funding for construction for this section being included in the Transportation Improvement Program.

While MDOT is comfortable to extend the time horizon for this section from the proposed 2040 to 2045 for Visualize 2050, consistent with the Project's NEPA horizon year, MDOT opposes any effort to remove this segment from the long-range plan as it would be inconsistent with the NEPA Record of Decision approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

Moreover, MDOT does not believe that a motion to remove only the Westlake Terrace to I-370 segment (called "Segment D" by TPB staff) is permissible. The federal regulations governing air quality conformity (40 CFR 93) provide clear definitions for transportation projects including transit projects and highway projects. The definition of a highway project in 40 CFR 93.101 mirrors FHWA regulations for actions evaluated under NEPA. Through the environmental review process, FHWA has defined the "highway project" through its approval of the Selected Alternative in their Record of Decision. The highway project's scope and limits cannot be changed for the purposes of evaluating air quality conformity as it must be consistent with the highway project in the Selected Alternative in the FHWA Record of Decision. The highway project may be phased for the purposes of construction, which is reflected in the air quality

The Honorable Christina Henderson
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inputs provided by MDOT. If the project were to be removed from the air quality conformity analysis, MDOT cannot advance the action including any construction and any commitments related to the project.

These issues being raised, MDOT would welcome the opportunity to put forward a resolution on Wednesday that affirms the City and the Department's shared goals while retaining "Segment D" in the long-range plan.

Southern Maryland Rapid Transit

We appreciate the feedback that we have received from stakeholders regarding the SMRT project in Charles and Prince George's Counties. MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) are actively coordinating with our local partners on completing the design, engineering, and environmental reviews to secure a federal record of decision on the project. We recently executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the two Counties to advance this activity. Currently, there is \$10M in federal earmark and state funding in the FY 23-26 TIP to complete this work, and it is listed as a study moving forward in the long-range plan (TIP Record 11620). There is a total of \$25M programmed in MDOT's current FY24-FY29 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), and MDOT will update the upcoming FY 26-29 TIP this year to match the funding levels in the CTP. The MDOT strongly supports the advancement of the design and NEPA process.

In order for a project to be included in the TPB's conformity inputs for construction, it needs to be financially constrained, and it would have to demonstrate that construction or full funding is reasonably expected to be available. As soon as there is a designated mode, alignment, and estimated cost for construction, MDOT will work with the counties to include SMRT as a construction project either in a future long-range plan update or as an off-cycle plan amendment.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Should you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Kari Snyder, MDOT Office of Planning and Capital Programming (OPCP) Regional Planner at 410-865-1305, toll free 888-713-1414 or via e-mail at ksnyder3@mdot.maryland.gov. Ms. Snyder will be happy to assist you. Of course, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Drew Morrison

Policy Advisor for Planning and Project Development, MDOT

cc: Ms. Kari Snyder, Regional Planner, OPCP, MDOT
Mr. Geoffrey Anderson, Chief of Planning, Programming, and Delivery, MDOT