



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Timothy Canan, Transportation Planning Data and Research Program Director
SUBJECT: Transit-Oriented Communities: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas
DATE: October 14, 2020

At the January 15, 2020 TPB meeting, Chair Russell identified work activities to support and advance transit oriented communities (TOCs) in the region as one of the focus areas for this year. At this meeting, staff briefed TPB members on potential activities that could further support member jurisdictions' efforts to enhance housing and transportation connectivity in areas served by transit. These activities are part of an effort to identify opportunities to help the region reach its housing targets, support the development of TOCs, and advance the region's long-range transportation plan, *Visualize 2045*. The regional housing targets adopted by COG align with and advance TPB's aspirational initiative, "Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together," which seeks to optimize the region's complex land use and transportation system in a manner that will favorably address traffic congestion and support increased accessibility as well as housing availability and affordability throughout the region.

The proposed TPB activities focused on analyzing land use and transportation interactions in areas served by High-Capacity Transit (HCT), which is defined as Metrorail; commuter rail (MARC and VRE); light rail (e.g., Purple line); and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)/Streetcars. Staff proposed conducting several analyses grouped into three distinct phases, or milestones:

1. Identify and Classify High Capacity Transit (HCT) Station Areas
2. Summarize Population, Households, and Employment in HCT Station Areas
3. Examine Transportation Connectivity in HCT Station Areas – Alternative Modes

Additionally, staff proposed developing a GIS-based interactive tool that contains the above analyses and making to tool available in a user-friendly interactive manner to staffs and members of the public. As stated during the January COG Board briefing:

"The purpose of this tool will be to build understanding of HCT Station Areas and their geographic distribution and presence throughout the region. Such a tool can help focus the discussion and efforts to examine potential projects, programs, and policies that promote the development of successful TOCs within each jurisdiction. The tool can also overlay two other types of geographically-focused areas the region uses to inform its planning and programming actions: Regional Activity Centers and Equity Emphasis Areas—census tracts with higher concentrations of low-income and minority residents. Specifically, the HCT Station Area tool can identify which HCT Station Areas are contained within a Regional Activity Center and/or in an Equity Emphasis Area. This knowledge can help inform both housing and transportation investment discussions and decisions."

Staff completed the basic TOC tool identifying the locations of all HCT Station Areas anticipated in the region by 2030, including the type of transit service offered, and listing them under the various geographic groupings of the region. A briefing of the TOC tool was planned for the TPB in March 2020 but was deferred as the disruptions of COVID-19 prompted changes in the March TPB agenda. Since then, staff has continued to build additional functionality into this TOC tool as work on tasks two and three (above) is completed. As of this date staff has completed tasks one, two, and the first of three parts of task three.

The three parts of task three are (1) walkshed analysis (identifying areas within a 10 minute of a transit station), (2) micro-mobility shed (identifying areas around a transit station reachable via bicycle/e-scooters) and (3) micro-transit shed (areas around a high capacity transit station best suited for micro transit service). The work delineating “walksheds” around transit station areas is intended to identify and help prioritize station areas where investments could improve accessibility to transit.

Staff will present the *High Capacity Transit in the National Capital Region Web Map* to the TPB at its October 21, 2020 meeting; demonstrate how it can be used to identify the stations areas within each of these classifications throughout the region; and view the Cooperative Forecast summaries and walksheds in each of the station areas. The map is accessible at the following location: <https://www.mwcog.org/maps/map-listing/hct-map-tool/>. This web map is hosted on the COG website and accessible by COG and TPB members, Technical Committee and Subcommittee members, state and local planning agency staffs, and members of the public. The interactive tool is scalable, enabling expansion and enhancements over time in response to input received from stakeholders and in accordance with the system’s technical capabilities.