
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

July 20, 2022
Ashley Hutson, CAC Chair

The TPB Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on Thursday, July 14, for a special joint meeting with the TPB officers that was designed to strengthen the relationship between the committee and the TPB.

The session featured short presentations from the three TPB officers – Chair Pam Sebesky (Manassas, VA), Vice Chair Reuben Collins (Charles County, MD), and Vice Chair Christina Henderson (District of Columbia). In their remarks, the officers described the unique challenges that each of their jurisdictions are facing. Remarks about Manassas and Charles County focused on connectivity and the continuing needs of drivers, while the presentation from DC stressed safety and pedestrian-related issues. After a full group discussion, the session broke into three groups, giving all participants – CAC and TPB members alike – the chance to discuss regional transportation issues that pertain to their own states.

Remarks of the Officers and Group Discussion

The officers' remarks were informal and identified some key priorities and concerns that were explored throughout the meeting:

- Chair Sebesky thanked the CAC members for their work as volunteers and spoke about the importance of the committee's input. She noted that our region is very diverse, calling attention to the different planning policies in three states. She further noted the region's outer jurisdictions are still quite auto dependent, and she believes it is important for her to bring that perspective into the TPB's discussions. She said CAC's input is particularly important because the committee members reflect different perspectives from across the region.
- Vice Chair Collins spoke about the differences among jurisdictions across the region. He noted that he and Chair Sebesky come from two of the smallest jurisdictions. He said that he came to the TPB primarily interested in supporting the development of light rail service into Charles County. He said that, as a growing community, it is imperative to look at ideas to reduce the impact of cars.
- Vice Chair Henderson noted that although DC is very different from Charles County and Manassas, not all transportation perspectives in the district are monolithic. She said that it is important for her work– both at the District and the regional levels – to support policies that reduce vehicle use as well as reduce traffic violence. She emphasized the importance of Safe Streets measures.

Member questions and comments focused largely on safety:

- A member of the CAC spoke about concerns that bicyclists ignore traffic laws and endanger pedestrians. Other members voiced support for this concern. However some members pushed back, noting that cyclists often do not feel they have adequate safe space on roads, and therefore they ride on sidewalks, which is the source of some of the tension.

- Another member spoke about the value of traffic enforcement. He suggested the District should erect signs saying “This improvement was funded through \$20 speeding tickets.
- A member expressed concern that DC is currently giving drivers licenses to individuals who have outstanding citations for traffic violations. Ms. Henderson said she does not agree with this policy.

State-Based Breakouts and Report-Outs

The meeting was divided into three breakouts based on state. At the conclusion, the full committee reconvened to hear brief summaries of the group discussions:

District of Columbia

Topics of discussion included:

- ***Street safety.*** The DC Council is currently working on the Safer Streets Amendments Act, which will address a variety of measures, including right-turns on red and raised crosswalks.
- ***Concerns about transit ridership and the future of WMATA.*** The group discussed the need to bring people back to transit after the pandemic. Participants also noted that federal emergency funding, which has been a lifeline to public transit throughout the country, will soon be ending.
- ***Support for bike lane networks.*** However, participants commented that more attention need to be paid to how those bike lanes interact with roads
- ***Electric vehicle charging.*** Members noted that people many people still want to own cars in DC, but increasingly they are going to be electric vehicles.

Maryland

Topics of discussion included:

- ***Need to pay attention to the outer jurisdictions’ needs.*** Recipients discussed the different levels of planning and development among the region’s jurisdictions. The group discussed whether jurisdictions that have more resources and experience might be able to provide support for jurisdictions with fewer resources. The group also discussed whether the TPB’s technical resources could be leveraged to help jurisdictions that are in greater need of planning support.
- ***Support for transit to suburban locations.*** Mr. Collins reiterated his interest in the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, which is currently in the NEPA process.
- ***Support for TPB climate initiatives.*** A member expressed support for the climate change goals adopted by the TPB in June.
- ***Maryland’s diminishing attraction to business.*** Finally, the group discussed concerns that Maryland seems to be less friendly to business in recent years, and this perception is in part fueled by transportation problems.

Virginia

Topics of discussion included:

- ***Connect jurisdictions*** – Virginians on the CAC recognize the diverse styles of living throughout the region and support multi-modal options. The group agreed that in order to reduce emissions and vehicles on the roads, the outer jurisdictions should support plans in the inner jurisdictions to expand transit and walking options, while recognizing that the outer jurisdictions are likely to remain largely dependent on automobile travel.

- ***Transportation projects often take a lot of time.*** The group discussed the fact that it often takes decades to make transportation improvements, but in the meantime, it is important to make shorter-term improvements to maximize interoperability between existing modes.
- ***Continuing concern about fragmentation.*** Although the group tried to remain positive, they said it nonetheless is true that the fragmentation and the lack of coordination among our region's jurisdictions continues to be a problem.
- ***The value of communication.*** Chair Sebesky urged the CAC members to develop relationships with their TPB members and communicate with them frequently.

Other Business

- Lyn Erickson of the TPB staff provided an overview of the upcoming TPB agenda.

Attendees

Members

Ashley Hutson, Chair
 Nancy Abeles
 Ra Amin
 Solomon Haile
 Delia Houseal
 Katherine Kortum
 Jeff Jamawat
 Eyal Li
 Daniel Papiernik
 Jeff Parnes
 Lorena Rios
 Elisa Walton

Staff

Rachel Beyerle
 Lyn Erickson
 John Swanson

Other

Pam Sebesky, TPB Chair
 Reuben Collins, TPB Vice Chair
 Christina Henderson, TPB Vice Chair
 Kacy Kostiuk, TPB member
 Heather Edelman, DC Council staff
 Matt Joseph
 Bill Orleans