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**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

December 18, 2019

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Phil Mendelson – DC Council  
Charles Allen - DC Council  
Samuel Stevens – DC Council  
Mark Rawlings – DDOT  
Jim Sebastian - DDOT  
Jason Groth – Charles County  
Dennis Mitchell - College Park  
Ron Burns – Frederick County  
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick  
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg  
Rodney Roberts – Greenbelt  
Christopher Conklin – Montgomery County (conference call)  
Monique Anderson – Walker – Prince George’s County  
Terry Bellamy – Prince George’s County Executive Office  
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County / DPW&T  
Bridget Newton – City of Rockville (conference call)  
Kacy Kostiuk – Takoma Park  
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – MDOT  
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria  
Libby Garvey – Arlington  
Catherine Hudgins – Fairfax County  
Linda Smyth – Fairfax County  
David Snyder – Falls Church  
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County  
Pamala Sebesky – City of Manassas  
Martine Nohe – Prince William County  
Ricardo Canizales – Prince William County  
Victor Angry – Prince William County  
Paolo Belita – Prince William County  
Rene’e Hamilton – VDOT  
Shyam Kannan – WMATA  
Allison Davis - WMATA

**MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT**

Kanti Srikanth  
Lyn Erickson  
Andrew Meese  
Mark Rawlings  
Chuck Bean  
Tim Canan  
Daivamani Sivasailam  
Ken Joh  
Matthew Gaskins  
Jessica Mirr

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Charlene Howard  
Dusan Vuksan  
Erin Morrow  
Jon Schermann  
Michael Farrell  
Mark Moran  
Brandon Brown  
Sergio Ritacco  
Steve Kania  
Abigail Zenner  
Karen Armendariz  
Stacy Cook  
Greg Goodwin  
Deborah Etheridge  
Jackie Sellman  
Bryan Hayes  
Leah Boggs  
Gregg Grant  
Emad Elshafie – City of Rockville  
Bill Orleans – Public Observer

Kari Snyder - MDOT  
Kristin Calkins – DC Office of Planning  
Mark Phillips - WMATA  
Allison Davis - WMATA  
Toria Lassiter – MDOT SHA  
Malcolm Watson - FCDOT  
Chris Laskowski – DC Council  
Regina Moore - VDOT  
Maria Sannel - VDOT  
Norman Whitaker - VDOT  
Peggy Dennis - MCCI  
Jim Maslanka - Alexandria  
Jeannine Walker – Prince George’s County  
Dan Goldfarb - NVTC  
Peter Johnson – DC Council  
Tim Robertson – VA DRPT  
Paolo Belita – Prince William County DOT  
Raymond White – Prince William County

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON TPB PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**

No members of the public signed up to comment.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 20, 2019 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes from the November TPB meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sebesky and approved by the board.

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

Mr. Rawlings said that the Technical Committee met on December 6. At the meeting, the committee focused on four items: the 2020 regional highway safety targets; the recommendations and priority action steps for the Bus Transformation Project; the current activities of the MATOC program; and the status of the selection process for the Enhanced Mobility grants program.

Mr. Rawlings said that two other items were presented for information. First, the committee was given an overview of VDOT's recent curbside management efforts and their coordination with other jurisdictions in the region. Second, the committee was briefed on the implementation of TLC projects conducted FY 2016 to 2018. He said that TPB staff informed the committee about the TLC solicitation timeline for the FY 2020.

### **4. CAC REPORT**

Mr. Jackson said that the Citizens Advisory Committee met on December 12. At the meeting, the committee received two presentations from TPB staff. First, Nick Ramfos presented early findings from the State of the Commute Survey. Second, Ken Joh briefed the committee on the purpose of the 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey and presented early findings.

Mr. Jackson said that the committee also continued its discussion on safety. The committee received a presentation that responded to the committee's concerns on transportation safety in the region. He expects the committee to continue discussing transportation safety in the future.

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

Mr. Srikanth said that Steering Committee met on December 6. The committee approved an amendment to the FY 2019-2024 TIP. The amendment was requested by Maryland Department of Transportation for the City of Rockville, which added about \$5 million in federal and local funds for the Baltimore Road Project. He said that the improvement will be to the roadway as well as roadway facilities, including a shared use path, sidewalks, steam restoration, and improvements to the alignment. Details can be found on page 3. Additionally, he said that the committee officially approved the new date for the public forum for the FY 2021-2024 TIP on January 16.

Mr. Srikanth said that there were no letters sent or received by the TPB during the past month.

Mr. Srikanth turned to announcements and updates. He noted that the TLC program will accept applications from January 6 to March 9. He said an abstract of the project's application is encouraged and due on January 27. He said that agencies can expect to receive technical assistance in the form of consultant services which range from \$30,000- 60,000 for planning projects and \$80,000 for a design project. More details can be found on page 17. He said that page 21 of the Director's report is a copy of the TPB News publication about the TIP Forum on January 16. He reported that a forum of Councils of Government and MPOs from 12 states and the District of Columbia who are participating in the Transportation Climate Initiative will be held on January 16, 2020 at COG to discuss the various proposals being developed to help reduce greenhouse gas emission in the transportation sector. He said the purpose of the meeting is to determine how MPOs and the Council of Governments can play a role in programs set to reduce greenhouse gases from the transportation sector. Details can be found page 23.

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

Chair Nohe said that this was his last meeting as chair and as a member of the TPB. He acknowledged TPB and committee members that were also completing their terms. He acknowledged Mr. Jackson for his service to the Citizens Advisory Committee for the past five years including serving as chair in 2019. He recognized Ms. Hudgins from Fairfax County for her service to the TPB for the past 16 years. He also recognized Ms. Smyth from Fairfax County for serving 15 years on TPB. Lastly, he recognized Mr. Rawlings for 13 years serving the Technical Committee including serving as chair this past year. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve the board as the chair.

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Ms. Russell recognized Chair Nohe for his service and presented him with a plaque for distinguished service to the people of the region.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **7. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2020 TPB OFFICERS**

Chair Nohe said that Mr. Nelson, Mrs. Newton, and Ms. Hudgins served as members of the nominating committee in charge of identifying officers for 2020.

On behalf of the nominating committee, Ms. Hudgins presented the nominations of candidates for the officers of the TPB for 2020. She said that the committee recommended that: Kelly Russell from the City of Frederick serve as chair; Charles Allen from the District of Columbia to serve as vice-chair; and Ms. Sebesky from the City of Manassas to serve as second vice-chair.

Ms. Hudgins made a motion to approve the slate of TPB officers for 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Umstattd and approved unanimously by the board.

### **8. PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING: HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS**

Mr. Schermann said he briefed the board in November about the federally defined highway safety performance measures and target setting requirements for MPOs. He also shared the methodology that staff used to develop a set of proposed National Capital Region highway safety targets and the targets themselves. He recommends that the board adopt Resolution R6-2020 to approve the latest iteration of regional highway safety targets. He referenced his presentation and reviewed the federal requirements and the resolution language. He said that the resolution includes clauses that staff developed to reflect board concerns.

Mr. Snyder said he is on the record as believing that these targets are tragically low, but he appreciates that some additions have been made to the language that he fully supports. He requested that the following be added: "Now therefore be it resolved that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board adopts the following set of highway safety targets for the National Capital Region as described below with the intent and commitment that actual performance will be much better than the below measures." He made a motion to adopt Resolution R6-2020 to approve regional highway safety targets with the amended language.

Ms. Garvey seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **9. STATUS REPORT ON THE 2019 ENHANCED MOBILITY GRANT PROGRAM**

Mr. Ritacco said that 11 percent of the region's population identifies as older adult, and around 8 percent has some form of disability. He said that these groups more than others need specialized transportation to be fully engaged members of their communities. He said that the Enhanced Mobility program provides funding to organizations that help these groups get around. He said that Enhanced Mobility has three main elements: the coordinated plan, which guides the program; the program itself, the mechanism for funding the projects; and the solicitation that is conducted every two years. He said that these elements share a goal to improve the mobility of older adults and people with disabilities in the region.

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Mr. Ritacco said that the coordinated plan was updated in December 2018. He said it identifies needs, establishes strategies, and recommends a set of projects for the solicitation process to consider. He said that the four strategies are: expand availability and coordination of transportation options, increase awareness of existing services, improve accessibility of transportation options, and to make transportation options more affordable and sustainable. He referred to his presentation and described the type of projects that the solicitation is requesting.

He said that Enhanced Mobility funding is allocated annually and that there is about \$2.8 million allocated for the region from FTA and that a match is required. He said the most recent solicitation ran from August to November and that in total 29 applications were submitted requesting a total of \$12.5 million. He said that the selection committee was chaired by Ms. Kostiuk and is made up of local and national experts who made their decisions based on selection criteria codified in the coordination plan. He said that staff is wrapping up recommendations from the selection committee and that the board will be asked to approve the recommendations in January 2020.

Ms. Kostiuk said that this is a great program that serves an important need.

Ms. Umstatt asked if a list of the organizations that submitted applications could be shared with board members.

Mr. Ritacco said that staff will share the submissions with the board.

Mr. Roberts asked how many of the 137 minivans and buses that have been requested have been funded.

Mr. Ritacco said that the recommendations for funding will be shared with the board in January.

Mr. Srikanth said that the TPB is not able to fund every application that wants to purchase a vehicle. He said it is good to see organizations that have gotten funding for vehicles in the past continue to operate those vehicles.

Mr. Srikanth made two announcements. First, he said that Ms. Newton who tried to attend the meeting via phone full supports the nominations for 2020 TPB officers.

Mr. Srikanth informed the board of an announcement he forgot to make during his report. He announced the retirement of Mr. Sivasailam, TPB's long time staff. He said that Mr. Sivasailam worked at the TPB for more than 27 years and praised his contributions. The board applauded his service.

## **10. BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT: ACTION PLAN**

Mr. Davey said that congestion, affordability, and mobility are major issues in the Washington region. He said that each of the jurisdictions grapple with these challenges. He said that almost half of the transit trips taken in the region are on bus. He said that the Bus Transformation Project study identified challenges and proposed strategies for addressing those challenges. He said that the people who conducted the survey spent almost 18 months talking and listening to residents from across the region at public meetings and open houses, and through public surveys. He said they reached thousands of bus customers were reached. He said that the study identified the four following recommendations: 1.) frequent and convenient bus services, 2.) bus priority in roadways, 3.) customer experience, and 4.) create a task force to implement the recommendations. He said that it is important that the jurisdictions work with WMATA to identify the most appropriate points of ownership and collaboration. He said that a controversial recommendation transferring bus service from WMATA to the jurisdictions was removed from consideration. He referred to his presentation and provided some more information about each of the recommendations.

Ms. Garvey said she likes the idea of an accountability group, but she pointed out that there are already so many different groups operating in the region. She also called for more clarity around how WMATA

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determines which routes to cancel. She referred to a specific route she uses that provides good service that is well used but it is still slated to be canceled as part of WMATA's proposed FY 2021 budget. She said that not only did she find this counterproductive to the thrust of the Bus Transformation Project calling to enhance bus service, she also did not know why WMATA made those decisions or what principles they were using to make these decisions to reduce services. She wondered if needed to make a motion to request WMATA provide us with more information on its approach for determining proposed changes to bus services

Mr. Allen, noting another specific route in the District, said that he agreed with Ms. Garvey about decisions being made to reduce bus services that appears counter to the recommendations to enhance bus service. He agreed that having more information on such proposals will be helpful. Mr. Allen also referenced recommendation 3 on slide 8. He said that providing free transfers between bus and rail is a good thing. He expressed concern that low-income riders, many of whom may not have a bank, might be penalized if they are unable to use a fare card like SmarTrip. He asked where an equity conversation might take place in the future.

Mr. Davey said that WMATA said that establishing clear regional standards should cover fares and providing equitable community bus service. He said the specific question about how to address riders who don't have bank accounts will need to be addressed in the future as WMATA and the jurisdictions work together on standards and funding.

Mr. Allen said that there is value in explicitly stating that there are vulnerable riders and that solutions should be crafted for these groups.

Mr. Davey said that there are many opportunities to help ensure that low-income riders have as much opportunity to ride the bus as anyone else.

Mr. Allen said that there is a long-term aspirational goal of getting to a place where everyone has a right to ride.

Ms. Russell asked if the outreach conducted as part of the study covered the entire region, or just within jurisdictions that are WMATA members.

Mr. Davey said that it was just the WMATA-related jurisdictions.

Ms. Russell said that there are outer jurisdictions not presently served by WMATA that are part of the region and should be included in the briefings on the recommendations of Bus Transformation Project and discussions given the connectivity.

Mr. Davey said that for the purposes of future studies it will be important that all jurisdictions be included.

Mr. Snyder said he supports comments made by Ms. Garvey. He said that more emphasis needs to be put on bus rapid transit. He also noted that as we think about bus service, a major issue is the demand during off peak hours, yet low ridership during this period. He said that hopefully, when we go forward, we'll also look at the most cost-effective way to provide service for whom, at what time of day.

Mr. Davey said that micro-transit is being delivered in a couple areas, and that on demand services may arise in the future. He said thinking more broadly about bus service is important. He said that this study did not identify corridors for possible bus rapid transit, but that WMATA and the jurisdictions should identify those opportunities together.

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Mr. Snyder said that the issues of bus stops and shelters is a huge issue.

Mr. Davey said that there is a lot of inconsistency in how a customer is treated when they get to their bus stop.

Ms. Garvey asked if staff could write a resolution or letter for the board to approve asking that WMATA to provide more information and commit to open data about its services. She said transparency at Metro is very important.

Regarding TPB action on the recommendations of the Bus Transformation Project, Mr. Srikanth said that he understands that over the next few months there will be outreach to each of the member jurisdictions to brief them on the recommendations. He said that once these briefings of member jurisdictions are complete, the TPB could discuss the matter and take an action it deems appropriate. Regarding additional information on proposed changes to bus service, he said staff can work with WMATA to get details on their approach as the budget is still in its development phase.

Chair Nohe said no motion would be necessary and this is a directive for staff to get more information and come back to the board at a future meeting.

Ms. Garvey said that her request was more about the importance of open data, rather than an information dump.

Mr. Lewis said that that Maryland has some of the same issues Ms. Garvey mentioned.

Ms. Anderson-Walker said that it is easy for people to get in and out of Prince George's County on bus, but it is difficult to circulate within the county. She also noted that enhancements should explore the options of extending the dedicated bus lanes that are already in Alexandria, Virginia, and bring them over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge into Maryland, and then start with more connectivity within Prince George's County.

Mr. Srikanth shared a comment from Mr. Conklin who is listening to the meeting via phone. Mr. Conklin said that he agrees with the earlier comments from Ms. Garvey and Mr. Allen about the importance of clearly communicating the reasons for proposed route changes with the jurisdictions.

#### **11. THE GOVERNOR HARRY W. NICE / SENATOR THOMAS "MAC" MIDDLETON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT: ALTERNATIVE SELECTED FOR CONSTRUCTION**

Mr. Lewis said that the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) board met on November 21 and decided not to move ahead with a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian access to the planned update to the Nice/Middleton Bridge. He said the purpose of this presentation is to explain why/

Mr. Pines encouraged the board to visit [newnicebridge.com](http://newnicebridge.com) to see the design and details about the new bridge structure. He said that MDTA staff provided no specific recommendation to MDTA board. They just reported feedback they heard from stakeholders and the community related to the barrier-separated path. He said that MDTA is the state's tolling agency and that they own and operate eight facilities in the state. He said that the MDTA board requested a project solicitation for the Nice/Middleton bridge that include two alternatives: one that is 61-foot wide with two lanes in each direction that accommodates cycling through lane sharing, and another that is 71-foot wide and provides an 8-foot barrier-separated bicycle and pedestrian path. He said that four proposals were received, and that the lowest proposal came in at more than \$462 million for the alternative without the barrier-separated bike path. He said that the barrier-separated path would cost almost \$64 million. He referred to his presentation and described the process for selecting the lowest-bid. He said that the primary reasons for the decisions are that funds are limited to the amount that can be earned via tolls and that there was not an opportunity to explore additional funding sources.

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Ms. Russell said that the selected cost is below the allowable cost for the project in the TIP. She said that this makes it seem like cost isn't not the issue. She expressed disappointment that the barrier-separated path was removed from the plans, even though the governor promised it when announcing the new bridge. She asked for clarity about how much Maryland said the project could cost in the TIP.

Mr. Srikanth said that when the MDOT and MDTA added the project to the plan, it was assumed that they would be able to invest about \$769 million. He said that this amount is a planning level estimate and explained that costs could change as designs get finalized and as construction begins.

Mr. Pines reiterated that all MDTA operations funding is supported by tolls. He said that to fund a project like this they must submit a financial plan that shows they can afford to move forward. He said that because they are using the TIFIA loan financing process, MDTA has to utilize the Federal Highway cost estimate review process, which looks at a risk evaluation when developing the cost estimate. He said that the \$769 million included a bike path and various contingencies required by the TIFIA process.

Ms. Russell said that the TPB moved the project forward in July because they wanted MDTA to have access to TIFIA loans. She said she that there should be an obligation to complete this project as it was originally pitched to the TPB.

Mr. Pines said that MDTA is making considerable investments to ensure safety with the lane-sharing alternative. He referenced the Conowingo Dam on which there is a shared facility that has had no incidents with cyclists.

Mr. Lewis said that Maryland has many priorities that have a short-term benefit in relieving congestion.

Mr. Groth said that Charles County is disappointed with the vote. He said that they wanted the bridge to be fully multimodal, and that they had hoped that a multimodal bridge could promote changes to land-use over its 100 year life. He asked about how the lane sharing with bicycles might work.

Mr. Pines said that the operational aspects of lane sharing have not been determined. He said that MDTA will work with bicycling groups to develop operational policies.

Mr. Groth asked if MDTA was going to form a focus or stakeholder group.

Mr. Pines said that a focus group could be convened, or that MDTA staff could attend local meetings in Charles County. He said even though MDTA has made their decision, they will continue to engage the impacted communities in Charles County.

Mr. Lewis said that they are committed to working with the community to figure out how we can best utilize the bridge to make it as safe as possible for cyclists.

Mr. Groth said that the commitment needs to be that MDTA will work more directly with the community, especially the bicycle community, to continue work on the design. He said Charles County is extremely thankful for the bridge. He added that when the bridge opens traffic will increase which will make it hard for cyclists.

Mr. Roberts said that the US 1 over Cowingo Dam is not a good example of a high speed facility without bike lanes because it is such an old facility. He said a bridge with an expected 100-year life should not draw inspiration from a facility that is almost 100 years old. He said that the board voted the wrong way on this project in July. He is disappointed that the governor broke a promise to build a bridge that included a barrier-separated path.

Mr. Pines said that MDTA staff put a lot of work into this project. He reminded the TPB that the decision was made by the MDTA board and not staff.

Mr. Lewis said that the day before the MDTA board met, there was an important announcement regarding the American Legion Bridge. He said that the process for updating that bridge includes a barrier-separated path.



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Mr. Allen asked when the Nice/Middleton bridge will be rebuilt.

Mr. Pines said that the contractor has committed to design a bridge for a 100-year service life.

Mr. Allen alluding to the changes in the area around the Woodrow Wilson Bridge since the 60 plus years after it was built said that the new wider Nice Bridge itself is going to generate lot of development and that we don't know what it's going to look like a hundred years from now, but we do know that it's going to continue to grow. Not seeing such far sightedness in this case, he said that the process feels like a way to justify a decision to build a bridge without the barrier-separated path. He said that MDTA has been clear from the start that cost was the primary decision point. Not mobility or safety. He said that the bid came in \$250 million less than planned, means that there should be money for the separated path.

Mr. Pines said that Mr. Allen's assumptions did not include all of the costs built into the \$769 million that MDTA plans to put into the bridge. He said that the \$462 million for construction is just one contract within a larger program.

Mr. Allen said that the TPB missed an opportunity as a board. He said this is a disappointing outcome.

Mr. Mendelson said he has two issues. The first is that the bridge will not include the barrier-separated path as promised. The other is that the TPB was led to believe that there would be honest and open consideration of the proposal that included the barrier-separated path. He said that the TPB has stated many times that a barrier-separated lane is important and adds value for the region. He said that in spite of this related input from the MPO and what the MPO was led to believe about good faith consideration of its input, that is not what has been decided. He noted that experience should inform the MPO about assurances on other projects that may come before the board. He said that he would support a letter that provides these sentiments to Maryland,

Ms. Russell agreed with Mr. Mendelson and proposed that staff write a letter from the TPB to the governor expressing dissatisfaction and concern over this process and urging them to reconsider and restore this project integrity to whole, as it was promised to the people of Maryland.

Mr. Lewis said that he had no issues with the TPB writing a letter and noted that MDOT had been very transparent in their briefings to the TPB. He said that the MDTA board received information on all sides of the issue made their decisions based on the issues that they need to consider related to their responsibilities.

Ms. Russell said that she would want the letter to reflect that we believe that the state has an obligation and if it's not MDTA, that the state needs to step up and fund that as part of the project.

Mr. Allen recommended that the letter be worded as strongly as possible. He said the TPB should be on the record for consistently arguing for the barrier-separated path.

Ms. Kostiuik said she agrees with the concerns voiced by board members. She pointed out that the MDTA documents say that bicycle access to the Nice/Middleton Bridge may be restricted during times of high congestion. She said this does not result in a lane for bicycle use that is available regularly, even if it is available at other times. Mr. Pines said that the AASHTO classification for the roadway is rural. He said that the bridge is a bottleneck for the region on Friday and Sunday nights, and that traffic flows freely for the remainder of the week. He said that even with an increase in traffic over the bridge, it has reserve capacity.

Chair Nohe called a vote to send a letter to the governor. There were three abstentions: Mr. Lewis, Mr. Burns, and Ms. Hamilton. The motion was approved by the board.

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## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **12. ADJOURN**

No other business was brought before the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.