
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

April 21, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Charles Allen, TPB Chair – DC Council
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Anna Chamberlin – DDOT
Kristin Calkins - DC Office of Planning
Brooke Pinto – DC Council
Ella Hanson – DC Council
Christina Henderson – DC Council
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT
Jason Groth – Charles County
Reuben Collins – Charles County
Patrick Wojahn – College Park
Denise Mitchell – College Park
Kai Hagen – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Neil Harris – City of Frederick
Dennis Eslinger - Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordon – Greenbelt
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Evan Glass – Montgomery County Legislative
Terry Bellamy – Prince George’s County Executive
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive
Deni Taveras – Prince George’s County Legislative
Bridget Donnell Newton – Rockville
Emad Elshafei - Rockville
Kacy Kostiuk – Takoma Park
Mark Korman – Maryland House of Delegates
Maria Sinner – Virginia DOT
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Christian Dorsey – Arlington County
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
David Meyer – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Matthew Letourneau – Loudoun County
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County
Pamela J. Sebesky – Manassas
Jeannette Rishell – Manassas Park
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Shyam Kannan – WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA

Tammy Stidham - NPS
Dan Koenig - FTA

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Chuck Bean
Lyn Erickson
Mark Moran
Tim Canan
Nick Ramfos
Andrew Meese
Tom Gates
Paul DesJardin
Stacy Cook
Andrew Austin
Karen Armendariz
Sergio Rittaco
John Swanson
Jane Posey
Deborah Etheridge
Charlene Howard
Dusan Vuksan
Erin Morrow
Elisa Walton - CAC chair
Lisa Rother - Retired, ULI and TLC Selection Chair

Materials referenced in the minutes can be found here:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2021/4/21/transportation-planning-board/>

1. VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Chair Allen called the meeting to order. He said a morning work session on Visualize 2045 had just been completed. He said that the board meeting would be recorded and broadcast and that the process for asking questions and voting would be the same as at past meetings. After each item, members would be asked to comment or vote by jurisdiction.

Ms. Erickson conducted a roll call. Members that were present are listed on the first page of the minutes.

Ms. Erickson said that no public comments were received regarding the April TPB meeting agenda items. She noted that a public comment period regarding the project submissions for Visualize 2045 was currently ongoing and would end on May 3. She said that 116 comments had been received to date, which were summarized in a memo that had been provided.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 17, 2021, MEETING MINUTES

Chair Allen moved approval of the minutes. Ms. Sebesky seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted summary, Mr. Groth said the Technical Committee met on April 2. He said the committee received briefings on items that are on the TPB agenda, including Bike to Work Day, the new TLC projects, and the forthcoming climate mitigation study. He said the committee discussed some interesting details regarding the inputs for Visualize 2045, including how telework is treated in the TPB's travel forecasting model and how the project input information identifies whether projects are aligned with the TPB's regional goals. Finally, he said the committee also received a briefing on the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Partnership, which is looking at potential charging station locations in the region, including a consideration of equity concerns.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND ACCESS FOR ALL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Referring to the posted report, Ms. Walton said the CAC met on April 15. She said the committee received a briefing on TLC and other technical assistance programs, but she said the majority of the meeting was spent receiving briefings on Visualize 2045. She said that CAC members expressed considerable interest in the plan, particularly in the areas of equity and climate change.

Referring to the posted report, Mr. Aguirre said that the Access for All Advisory Committee met on April 9. He said the committee received a briefing on Visualize 2045 and provided suggestions regarding public input for the plan, including the need to consider non-commuter and weekend users of transit services. He said the committee received a briefing and provided input on Reach A Ride, which is a website and call center that provides consumers and social service agencies access to information about specialized transportation services in the region. He said the committee also discussed the Enhanced Mobility solicitation and an overview of the CRRSAA funding, which would be covered later in the TPB agenda. Under "Other Business," the AFA discussed a lawsuit, Equal Rights Center vs. Uber Technologies, which was looking at an alleged failure to provide equivalent service under 88 Title 3 to people with disabilities.

Ms. Kostiuik highlighted Mr. Aguirre's comments about the need to consider non-commuter travel and weekend users, noting that many people have irregular work hours and also are dependent on transportation systems for shopping and other non-work travel.

Mr. Lewis echoed Ms. Kostiuik's comment, noting that 80% of trips are not work-related.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Referring to the posted material, Mr. Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on April 2. He said the committee approved a TPB proclamation that May 21 is Bike to Work Day. He said the committee also approved two TIP amendments, one for projects in Prince William County in Virginia and the other for projects in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Srikanth called attention to other items in the materials posted under this item, including: letters of support from the TPB on behalf of member jurisdictions for federal grant applications; a memorandum on the MOU with the Fredericksburg MPO, which the TPB will be asked to approve in May; a memorandum on the TPB's new Regional Safety Program; and a memorandum on a forthcoming white paper on resiliency within the transportation sector.

Finally, Mr. Srikanth described a memorandum, which had been posted the previous day, providing a point-in-time summary of the president's American Jobs Plan. He spoke about the plan's funding levels, including funding for transportation.

Chair Allen said the Steering Committee at its meeting on April 2 had discussed the possibility of delaying the submission of the long-range plan. He asked if staff had contacted U.S.DOT about that possibility.

Mr. Srikanth said he had spoken with U.S.DOT representatives on this question. They told him that the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) had inquired last year about the possibility of extending the deadlines for a number of activities including MPO long-range plans. They had answered that U.S.DOT did not have the legislative authority to extend the deadline. The U.S.DOT representatives did say that TPB could make a formal inquiry on its own to seek an answer that would be more specific to the TPB's situation.

Mr. Allen asked Mr. Srikanth to share the AMPO request and U.S.DOT response with members of the board. He said consideration should be given to next steps with regard to writing to the U.S.DOT.

Noting the summary of the president's American Jobs Plan document, Mr. Harris suggested that the TPB form a task force to identify and endorse some regionally significant projects that could be potential subjects for funding requests related to the forthcoming infrastructure legislation. He said this bill will represent a rare opportunity for the TPB to work as a regional body to obtain funding for projects to make progress on regional priorities. He said he supported the TPB's endorsement of jurisdictional funding requests, but he said the TPB should also lead an effort aimed at regional transformation.

Mr. Lewis said he supported Mr. Harris' comments, particularly the example he provided about fleet electrification. He said there is considerable excitement in the region related to electric vehicles.

Chair Allen said he would like to follow up regarding the previous two comments. He affirmed the tremendous opportunity that the infrastructure plan could offer.

Mr. Kannan asked for a confirmation of his understanding that the U.S.DOT letter to AMPO, to which Mr. Srikanth earlier referred, was from the past administration and that staff had not received comparable information from the Biden administration

Mr. Srikanth confirmed that this was correct, although he also noted that the federal metropolitan planning regulations had not changed for several administrations.

Mr. Kannan said the TPB needs an "all-hands-on-deck" approach to addressing its responsibility as a board to meet climate change goals. He said that the market share of electric vehicles is currently 0.3 percent. He acknowledged the importance of fleet electrification, noting that 90% of vehicles must be electrified by 2050 if the region is to meet its GHG emissions targets. He suggested the TPB either needs to adjust its baseline expectations for meeting this level of electrification, or it needs to consider other tools in addition to electrification.

Ms. Sinner asked if an extension of the long-range planned deadline would also include extensions of other federally required actions that might be affected by the status of the TPB's long-range plan, such as NEPA requirements.

Mr. Srikanth said the letter from AMPO asked about a range of requirements and deadlines, including some that pertain more directly to state DOTs. He said that his inquiry with U.S.DOT focused solely on MPO requirements, to which the TPB is subject, specifically conformity analysis and the long-range plan.

Ms. Kostiuk said she was interested in exploring a potential extension of the long-range plan deadline. She said it could provide an opportunity to look more closely at climate impacts, and it particularly could be used to integrate findings from the climate change study that is underway. She asked what the genesis was for the letter submitted by AMPO that requested the deadline extensions.

Mr. Srikanth said that when the pandemic began last spring there were disruptions to a variety of activities conducted by transportation agencies at all levels and those by MPOs as well. He noted that, for example, the TPB did not have a process for meeting virtually and the bylaws had to be amended to permit such meetings. He said that MPOs around the country faced issues related to various requirements – such as long-range plan updates, TIP updates, and funding updates -- and they were concerned about potentially missing federal deadlines. Therefore, AMPO sought a federal deadline extension.

Mr. Lewis picked up on the theme of electric vehicles, noting that although the number of electric vehicles in the region is still small, the share of electric vehicles in the regional fleet is growing at a rapid pace. He further noted that the electric vehicle program in the Biden infrastructure bill would be very large.

Ms. Taveras noted that a Prince George's County electric bus was featured in the event announcing the president's infrastructure plan.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Allen noted that many participants in the meeting had already attended a 90-minute work session that morning regarding the inputs for the constrained element of the long-range plan. He said there was not enough time at the meeting to fully discuss all questions and comments, so he asked staff to schedule additional opportunities for such input. He thanked staff for providing new opportunities for discussion about the project submissions and the inputs for air quality conformity analysis. He noted that the board has been very clear that it would take seriously its role in addressing climate change as it relates to the region's transportation infrastructure.

7. CRRSAA FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND A FY 2019-2024 TIP AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE THE PROJECTS

Referring to the posted material, Ms. Winchell-Mendy provided a basic overview of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and presented information on the projects recommended for funding. She explained that this funding would help organizations that provide travel assistance to older adults and people with disabilities who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. She said that an internal selection committee of five members from COG and TPB staff met on April 7 and developed the recommendations for six projects.

Ms. Winchell-Mendy said staff recommended approval of R17-2021 and an amendment of the FY 2019-2024 TIP, to include the six projects.

Chairman Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R17-2021 to approve funding recommendations, and amendment of the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program to include the projects.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Sebesky and was approved unanimously.

8. FY 2022 TLC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Ms. Rother, who served as a member of the TLC selection panel, shared a quick overview on the panel's review and process.

Referring to the posted material, Mr. Swanson shared an overview of the TLC program. He presented information on the 11 projects recommended for funding.

Chairman Allen made a motion to approve the project recommendations and approve TLC technical assistance recipients under the FY 22 TLC program.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Snyder and was approved unanimously.

9. VISUALIZE 2045: BRIEFING ON PROJECT INPUTS AND DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS FOR THE 2022 UPDATE TO VISUALIZE 2045 AND THE FY2023-2026 TIP

Referring to the presentation, Ms. Cook reviewed some background information about the constrained element of Visualize 2045 and the Air Quality Conformity process.

Mr. Austin reviewed some of the major projects that have been submitted as inputs to the plan.

Ms. Posey reviewed the Air Quality Conformity scope of work and federal requirement for the Air Quality Conformity analysis.

Ms. Newton referred to the work session held prior to the meeting. She asked her colleagues to take another look at the Maryland I-270 project. She stated that the City of Rockville is opposed to the changes and supports bringing more transit to the area.

Mr. Lewis explained that the I-270 corridor is served by three commuter bus routes that currently are affected by congestion.

Ms. Kostiuk noted that the board must consider the project inputs as a whole, but the board also looks at individual projects, and these two tasks can be difficult to pursue simultaneously. She said she agreed with Ms. Newton concerning the I-270 project. She said that she wondered what the standard is that is being used in this air quality conformity analysis, and whether there could be a look at it from a more restrictive ozone requirement, as she understood that president Biden had indicated an interest in tougher ozone standards.

Mr. Srikanth said that the prospects for tougher ozone standards exist. He explained the current (2015) ozone standards and the process for how the EPA establishes regulations for national air quality standards. He next outlined how multi-sector air quality modeling is done for state implementation plans and how the on-road motor vehicle emissions levels are set for use in the MPO's regional air quality conformity modeling. For the transportation sector, the TPB must use the standards and the calculations established by the EPA for on-road emissions. He said that given the various combinations and factors that go into air quality planning, it would be challenging to conduct a scenario analysis just for the transportation sector.

Ms. Kostiuk thanked Mr. Srikanth for the explanation and asked whether some of the work done for air quality conformity analysis might be applied to the GHG analysis.

Mr. Srikanth clarified that these federal standards do not include GHG; they only apply to the criteria pollutants, including ozone, that are specified in federal law. But he did note that emissions forecasting can be done for GHG and the TPB does perform such analysis.

Mr. Wojahn said he agreed with his colleagues from Rockville and Takoma Park. He said he said that to reach our climate goals the region must look at GHG and at how projects in the long-range plan impact land-use patterns so that people are not forced to drive.

Mr. Lewis referred to a Maryland law calling for a reduction in GHG between 2006 and 2030. He asked Mr. Srikanth to explain the region's goals for ozone reductions over time.

Mr. Srikanth explained that there have been three different ozone standards since 1995. Each one has been progressively tougher, and the region was not in attainment of these standards when they were first established, but then proceeded to attain the standards. He said that for the fourth ozone standard, the 2015 one, the region is currently not in attainment.

Mr. Lewis noted that the region has never backed away from tough environmental standards. He also noted that it is important to remember that the high cost of housing in the region compels many people to move farther out and to have longer commutes.

Mr. Korman noted that he agreed with the board members from Rockville and Takoma Park. He noted that the HOV lanes that currently operate as general-purpose lanes 18 hours a day would be converted to HOT lanes 24 hours a day. He asked that the project description be more accurate.

Mr. Allen noted that a general theme from the work session and board discussion was a request for more information.

Mr. Kannan agreed with Mr. Lewis that the best transportation strategy is a land-use strategy. He also noted that while the EPA does not require the region to attain certain GHG or carbon emissions as part of the air quality conformity analysis, it may still be something the region should strive to achieve.

Mr. Allen noted that there had been a robust discussion and a need for more information and discussion. He also noted that the board may need more time to get the information it needs prior to approval. He requested another work session be scheduled prior to the May meeting to provide more time for the board to ask questions and hold its discussion.

Mr. Srikanth noted that the materials for the item regarding the Climate Study are available for review with the board materials.

10. TPB CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION STUDY OF 2021

This item was deferred to the May meeting.

11. ADJOURN

No other business was brought to the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:04 P.M.