



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
**SUBJECT:** Steering Committee Actions and Report of the Director  
**DATE:** October 15, 2020

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The attached materials include:

- Steering Committee Actions
- Letters Sent/Received
- Announcements and Updates





**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
**SUBJECT:** Steering Committee Actions  
**DATE:** October 15, 2020

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The were no actions at the Steering Committee meeting of October 2, 2020.





**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
**SUBJECT:** Letters Sent/Received  
**DATE:** October 15, 2020

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The attached letter was sent/received since the last TPB meeting.



October 14, 2020

Re: Emergency federal funds for state and local highway and public transportation systems

Dear Members of the Congressional Delegation for the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland:

We write to you on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, representing 24 local governments in northern Virginia, suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia – home to over 6 million residents and the seat of the federal government, with hundreds of thousands of employees and contractors serving the country.

As the country continues to battle the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, emergency stabilization funding to local governments is essential to sustained operations. We urge you to support targeted federal transportation infrastructure investments at the local level, as the country recovers from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are aware, the current pandemic has severely impacted the economy at local, regional, and state levels and taken an incredible toll on our local governments, who traditionally spend substantial portions of their budgets on transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation projects and service are critical to promote economic growth, create jobs and help prepare communities for a safer future. Public transportation service, in particular, is a lifeline for essential workers, especially in the National Capital Region, and critical to our economic health and well-being.

We urge you to support the following federal investments to support our region, and the nation's transportation system:

- **\$32 Billion in Emergency Federal Funds for Transit Agencies including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA):** with unprecedented drops in ridership and losses in revenue transit agencies nationally need \$32 billion in emergency funds to avoid damaging service and jobs cuts and minimize economic hardship. When the CARES Act funding runs out, transit agencies, including WMATA, will be forced to cut transit service and furlough or lay off workers or redistribute capital funds, intended for repairs and expansion, to operating budgets. Both options will seriously harm the viability, safety, and reliability of transit service in the short and long term, but more importantly, it will harm the riders, businesses, and regional economies and workers that depend on transit.
- **\$37 Billion in Emergency Federal Funds for State Departments of Transportation:** additional funding of \$37 billion should be allocated to state departments of transportation to support the maintenance and essential surface transportation projects for roads and highways at the local, state and regional. It is reported that because of impact on state and local revenues, \$8.6 billion in surface transportation projects have been delayed or cancelled, with more on the horizon absent any clear sign of support from the federal government.

The allocation of additional federal funding is essential to avoid any further cutbacks at the local level that would undermine the readiness of the transportation system to support economic recovery. We urge these funds be provided to local areas of all sizes and we that the funds be

provided at 100% federal share to reduce the burden on local areas, given the depletion of local budgets from COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure the availability to utilize these funds during times of critical challenges to local budgets.

Transportation investments are proven to promote economic growth, create jobs, and help prepare communities for a safer future. While the above emergency funding is critical, the passage of a new surface transportation authorization, or long-term continuation of the FAST Act, is vital to ensure financial stability and enable state and local investment in the state of good repair and operations of the region's highway and transit systems. Given the significant disruption in people's travel behavior and commercial activities, efforts need to be made that the funding associated with the new surface transportation authorization are not impacted by this economic disruption and its impacts on highway and public transportation travel.

We look forward to working with you to support transportation investments that create jobs and is essential to facilitate economic recovery. We commend your leadership as you work to ensure our communities and transportation systems receive the support they need. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with your team. If you have any questions, please reach out to COG's Executive Director Chuck Bean at [cbean@mwcog.org](mailto:cbean@mwcog.org) or (202)962-3260.

Sincerely,



Derrick L. Davis  
Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Councilmember, Prince George's County



Kelly Russell  
Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Alderman, City of Frederick



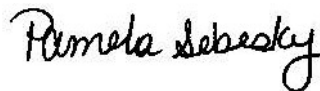
Christian Dorsey  
Vice Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Board Member, Arlington County



Charles Allen  
Vice Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Councilmember, District of Columbia



Robert C. White, Jr.  
Vice Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Councilmember, District of Columbia



Pam Sebesky  
Vice Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Vice Mayor, City of Manassas





## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
**SUBJECT:** Announcements and Updates  
**DATE:** October 15, 2020

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The attached documents provide updates on activities that are not included as separate items on the TPB agenda.





## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Andrew Meese, TPB Systems Performance Planning Director  
**SUBJECT:** COG/TPB Activities to Compile COVID-19 Transportation Impacts Information  
**DATE:** October 15, 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

At the September 16, 2020 meeting, TPB members asked to be briefed on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region's transportation systems. This memorandum describes ongoing staff activities to compile and assess such information, summaries of which will be presented to the TPB and other stakeholders in future months.

## **INFORMATION GATHERING AND ASSESSMENT**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated precautions since March 2020 have had profound impacts on travel and transportation systems in the National Capital Region. The changes are due to simultaneous disruptions to the many factors that generate travel demand including – employment, economic activities, work arrangements, and personal and public health. Additionally, the responses to these disruptions from establishments, individuals and governments continue to evolve. Challenges in compiling and assessing these impacts include 1) the situation evolves quickly, often more quickly than our available data pipelines are providing data; 2) data sources are disparate and often geographically, temporally, and methodologically not consistent with one another; 3) understanding multi-disciplinary interactions of impacts may not be apparent when looking at any individual data set.

TPB staff currently is collaborating with COG's community, economic, and environmental staff planners to put together a multi-sectoral assessment of impacts, to be presented to the TPB and other stakeholders in future months. It is hoped that this effort will provide a clear, uniquely regional perspective on the situation, so as to inform long term planning and programming activities. This work will examine data availability on various aspects, consider the fidelity and limitations of the data, and examine if assessment is repeatable over time to help assess the long-term nature/extent of change.

This effort will also work towards a better understanding of what aspects the region needs to address to make our transportation system, among other sectors, more resilient and more equitable in the future. A meaningful analysis of this unprecedented change in the supply and demand on transportation needs accurate, representative, and comprehensive data on the demand and supply sides. For example, while the pandemic-related restrictions on movement have impacted travel demand, the personal and public health nature of the pandemic has affected the ability to provide transportation service – particularly public transportation. Regionally, fares contribute about 30% (ranging from 10% to 70% on different systems) of the operating costs of providing public

transportation. Inability to collect these fares (on systems that have suspended fare collection due to pandemic social distancing precautions) and reduced travel (particularly on the rail systems) have impacted the financial viability of public transportation. At the same time, transit agencies have had to consider rider and employee health risks and undertake both additional cleaning/disinfecting and equipment modification (e.g., driver shields) activities, while maintaining as much transit service as feasible. This comes at a time when these services have been most needed – especially the bus services.

Emergency orders in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia impacting travel were issued in the general time period of March 5 through 20, 2020. The COG website at [www.mwcog.org/about-us/covid-19/](http://www.mwcog.org/about-us/covid-19/) provides information about declarations as well as links to data sources about COVID-19 and its (non-transportation) impacts.

## **PREVIEW OF INFORMATION**

Staff has been researching data and information from a variety of sources to examine the COVID-19 pandemic's transportation impacts from several perspectives. These data differ in geography, time scales, and methodologies because of the variety of mostly non-COG/TPB sources. Analysis, especially of the interrelationships among trends, is not complete. But a few general trends can be observed, consistent with what has been discussed in the media. These observations include:

- Many transportation indicators, such as traffic volumes and vehicle miles of travel (where these data are available), have shown that reductions in demand were most severe in the late March through April time frame, and have trended back toward (but generally remain under, to varying degrees) historical norms since then.
- Travel associated with commute trips appears to have been more significantly impacted than non-commute travel. Influencing factors likely include both increased telework and increased unemployment.
- Freight/truck travel never declined as much as passenger travel did.
- The complex interaction among transit ridership, service level changes, and reduced capacities on board buses and train cars (reflecting social distancing precautions) will need to be further analyzed.

## **OUTLOOK**

COG/TPB staff plans to work on this important issue expediently, but with enough time for appropriate consideration and analysis of the disparate data sources, to be able to understand and explain trends with sufficient confidence. We expect to be able to brief the TPB and other stakeholders in the coming months.

TPB NEWS, VISUALIZE 2045

## The TPB is conducting a public opinion survey

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Oct 13, 2020



We're beginning to work on the region's next long-range transportation plan and wanted to find out what the region thinks. So, the TPB launched a region-wide public opinion survey at the end of September. The survey will provide input for the update of Visualize 2045, the region's long-range transportation plan. It is seeking information about changes in travel habits during the COVID-19 pandemic and will also explore what the region's residents want our transportation future to look like over the next 25 years. In addition to probing concerns about public health, the survey will ask about external forces such as climate change, driverless cars, and concerns about equity. The survey collection, which was scientifically designed to be statistically significant, will close at the end of October.

TPB staff hired consultants who have been contacting randomly selected participants through the mail and asking them to complete the survey online using a unique code provided to each respondent. The survey team has a goal to reach 2,000 respondents for a statistically significant sample of people in the region. As of early October, more than 1,500 surveys had been completed.

Once the survey is complete, the research team will review the responses. TPB staff plan to share the survey results, which will be available at the county level, at the December TPB meeting.

The survey is one of the first activities in the process to develop the 2022 update to the region's long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2045. Staff are in the process of developing outreach activities to inform and involve the public.

Contact: **John Swanson**  
Phone: 202-962-3295  
Email: [jswanson@mwkog.org](mailto:jswanson@mwkog.org)





## **TPB CONNECTED AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES (CAV) WEBINAR SERIES**

### **WEBINAR #3: PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE: INTERACTIONS**

Friday, October 30, 2020  
1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Registration Information: Registration is free of charge, but advanced registration is required. Please use this link to register: [CAV Webinar #3 Registration](#)

The third webinar in the series is focused on Connected and Autonomous Vehicles' impacts on the TPB's and member agencies' activities.

All are welcome, especially TPB member agency and committee personnel involved in or with an interest in the topic.

Featuring a trio of presentations dealing with the issues surrounding CAV's interactions with Pedestrians, Bicycles, and Infrastructure. Karina Ricks, Director of the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure, will be discussing Pittsburgh's experience with CAV activity in the city and interactions with pedestrians and bicycles. Stefanie Brodie, Senior Researcher with Toole Design, will discuss pedestrians and bicycles and their interactions with CAVs. Michael Tantillo, Transportation Project Manager with VHB, will give an update on CAVs and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD).

TPB is planning more CAV webinars, stay tuned for announcements on future webinars.

Please refer any questions or comments to:

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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
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Washington D.C., 20002-4239  
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202-962-3201 fax





NEWS RELEASE

## Less daylight can lead to more pedestrian deaths

Oct 1, 2020



# HER LIFE IS FRAGILE.

Yield to pedestrians  
when turning.

STREET  
**SMART**  
BeStreetSmart.net

Fall and winter are a high-risk time of year for people walking and biking, and local officials are reminding residents to make safety a top priority during the coming months.

For the first time, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has declared October national Pedestrian Safety Month to call attention to the growing number of pedestrian crashes and fatalities that occur when there is less daylight. NHTSA reports that 76 percent of pedestrian deaths happen after dark.

Last year, 99 people were killed while out walking and biking in metropolitan Washington. This accounts for nearly one third of all traffic fatalities across the region.

“Fall and winter months are when we usually see a spike in crashes involving pedestrians,” said Kelly Russell, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Chair and City of Frederick Alderman. “When there are fewer daylight hours, visibility becomes a major safety issue. It’s important to remember that each crash statistic represents a real person, and every crash can have life-changing consequences for everyone involved.”

The annual Street Smart fall safety initiative is again urging drivers and people walking and biking to obey the rules of the road and stay alert, especially as many are distracted due to the current health crisis. The cornerstone of this year’s campaign is the collection of [gripping stories](#) told by those whose lives have been shattered by a preventable mistake on area roadways.

Among the Street Smart campaign’s safety tips for drivers are reminders to obey the speed limit, be on the lookout for people walking and biking, stop for people crossing the street, and always watch for and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists when turning. People walking are urged to cross with <sup>17</sup>

caution, especially when it's dark, and use crosswalks where available. People on bikes are reminded to obey all traffic laws and always use lights at night.

Area residents can expect increased enforcement of traffic safety laws that protect people walking and biking. Police departments across the region will be educating drivers who fail to obey the speed limit or don't stop for people in crosswalks.

The Street Smart campaign complements other regional efforts to reduce injuries and fatalities on area roadways. Earlier this year, the TPB adopted a [regional roadway safety policy](#), a set of shared actions and strategies to reduce injuries and fatalities on area roadways, including making infrastructure safer, improving road user behavior, and addressing vehicle speed and distracted driving, among other actions. It also established and funded the TPB Regional Safety Program, to assist area jurisdictions and the region with studying, developing, and implementing projects, programs, and policies that improve safety outcomes for all roadway users.

### **Street Smart Safety Tips**

Safety advocates say it is important for everyone to be aware of their surroundings, avoid distractions, and follow the rules of the road.

If you're driving ...

- Slow down and obey the speed limit.
- Be sure to always come to a complete stop at traffic lights and stop signs.
- Watch and wait for people using crosswalks.
- When turning right or left, yield to people walking and biking.
- Watch out for people who may occasionally walk in the roadway as they attempt to maintain social distancing.
- Allow at least 3 feet when passing bikes.
- Avoid using your cell phone and never text while driving.

If you're walking ...

- Make sure you double check for traffic if you are stepping into the street to maintain social distancing.
- Always cross at the corner and use crosswalks when available, and make sure drivers see you before you start to cross the street.
- Stick to sidewalks and designated walking paths when possible.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Before crossing, look left, right, and left again.
- Use caution and remain alert to others around you—drivers, people on bikes, and other pedestrians.
- Make sure others can see you, especially after dark. Wear something bright or reflective.
- Avoid using your cell phone while you're crossing the street.

If you're biking ...

- Obey signs and signals.
- Never ride against traffic.
- Ride in a straight line at least 3 feet from parked cars.
- Use hand signals to tell drivers what you intend to do.
- Wear a helmet.
- Use lights at night and when visibility is poor.
- Use bike lanes when available.

**MORE:** Learn more about Street Smart at [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net) and follow the program on Twitter at [twitter.com/COGStreetSmart](https://twitter.com/COGStreetSmart).

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