
**TPB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING RECAP**

January 8, 2021

1. WELCOME, VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, AND MEMBER ROLL CALL PROTOCOL

Staff described the procedures and protocols for the virtual meeting and conducted a roll call. Meeting participants are documented in the attached attendance list.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2020 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

There were no questions or comments regarding the December Technical Committee meeting. The minutes were approved.

ITEMS FOR THE BOARD AGENDA

3. APPROVAL OF 2021 APPOINTMENTS TO THE TPB'S CAC

Mr. Swanson (TPB) updated the Technical Committee on the recruitment for the 2021-2022 Community Advisory Committee (CAC). He provided a briefing on the revised process for appointing members, discussed findings from the recruitment application, and informed the Technical committee that, at the January TPB meeting, residents of the Washington region will be appointed to serve as members on the CAC for the upcoming two years.

Mr. Erenrich (Montgomery County) asked if any transportation professionals or local/regional government employees are being considered and, if so, asks that they be recognized as such during the recruitment process.

Ms. Calkins (DCOP) noted that, if highlighting a transportation professional or local/regional government employee, it should not be in a concerning or disqualifying method, as it is possible to serve on the committee without bias.

Mr. Swanson stated that there is a conflict of interest statement that applicants are asked to sign and that the TPB officers will be informed.

4. THE UPWP, SIMPLIFIED

Ms. Erickson provided information on the basic MPO requirements and provided suggestions on how to navigate the TPB. The annual activities that are always underway were presented, including information about the committees and various annual programs. Every effort is made to try to synchronize board interests with the federally required products. The Board will be asked to approve the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in March.

The Mission of an MPO is to implement the Federal Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process, 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C (section 450.300 to 450.340). TPB serves as a representative group of local stakeholders. TPB carries out the 3”C” process. It is a CONTINUING process, it basically never stops, it’s a COOPERATIVE process – it is consensus based, and it is COMPREHENSIVE – it’s multimodal and multidisciplinary. TPB is required to develop a long-range plan and a short-range transportation improvement program. TPB is required to apply a specific air quality conformity analysis on the projects in both. TPB is also required to engage in Performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) which is the application of performance management principles to achieve desired performance outcomes for the multimodal transportation system. These requirements also specify how to develop these and what needs to be in them. TPB’s plans and programs consider all transportation modes and support

metropolitan community and economic development. TPB works in conjunction with state air and transportation agencies to meet federal clean air act standards, in accordance with 40 CFR Part 93.

As part of the 3C process, the TPB does three main things: TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal aid transportation funding to flow to our region; TPB provides technical resources for consensus building/decision making; and TPB provides a forum for regional coordination. The UPWP defines “HOW” the MPO activities are carried out and what they are. There is only one way to spend metropolitan transportation funding. It automatically comes to MPOs like TPB. TPB only gets the bare minimum amount of funding, and that funding is wholly directed to conducting the metropolitan transportation planning process. The presentation contains the list of on-going activities. In February, Ms. Erickson will provide a breakdown of the revenues and expenditures, and a more clearly defined list of activities.

INFORMATION ITEMS

5. VISUALIZE 2045 – PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Ms. Cook provided a presentation on the planning assumptions for the update to Visualize 2045, as relates to air quality conformity and system performance analysis, and the inputs and tools used for this analysis. Staff reflected on the requirements for development of the LRTP, noting excerpts from the Code of Federal Regulations: *23 CFR § 450.324 - Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan*. Staff noted that planning for twenty years out always requires planning for an uncertain future and acknowledged that the pandemic has increased that level of uncertainty. Considering this uncertainty, TPB staff reviewed the assumptions made for the update to Visualize 2045, that take into account best practices and federal requirements.

Mr. Phillips referenced a letter sent by the Coalition for Smart Growth, January 7, 2021 to TPB that commented on the assumptions for the development of the cooperative forecast, suggesting they consider the Housing Targets and goals of the Climate and Energy Action Plan.

Mr. Srikanth noted that the land use concepts are inherent in Visualize 2045, but that TPB does not develop land use forecasts for use in its conformity analysis, rather uses what is considered as official forecasts of population, households and employment (called cooperative forecasts) that are developed by member local governments through COG’s Planning Directors Advisory Committee. TPB has shared the suggestion with them and will defer to them on the inputs to round 9.2.

6. VISUALIZE 2045 – FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Mr. Randall briefed the committee on the scope of work and preliminary results for financial plan for the 2022 update of the Visualize 2045 long-range transportation plan. Federal planning regulations require the long-range transportation plan and TIP to have a financial plan that demonstrates how the projects and programs in the plan and TIP can be implemented and the sources of funding reasonably expected to be made available to carry them out. The long-range plan must be fiscally constrained, with reasonably expected revenues equal to the estimated cost of operating and maintaining the region’s highway and transit systems and keeping them in a state of good repair, as well as paying for the expansion projects in the plan. This effort must be documented in the financial plan, which is in year of expenditure dollars so that costs in the 2030s and 2040s are considerably greater due to inflation.

Mr. Randall reviewed the methodology for developing future revenue and cost estimates. He then showed the 2018 graphs of the revenues for the region and for each state by source, followed by the expenditures for the region by highway or transit mode and by purpose. About 34 percent of funding is going to highways and 66 percent to transit, of which the majority will go towards WMATA. The majority of funding, 78 percent, goes towards operations, maintenance, and state of good repair. Just 22

percent goes towards capital for expansion projects, including \$40 billion for highway expansion and \$24 billion of transit expansion.

Mr. Randall reported on preliminary forecasts by the state DOTs and WMATA. Revenues are projected to be reduced for the period of the analysis, 2023 to 2045, compared to that same period from the 2018 analysis. Short term financial forecasts are being impacted by the pandemic, and even though the assumption is that trends will resume upwards by 2023, the District and Maryland have scaled back their forecasts. In contrast, Virginia expects increased revenues over the same period due to legislation passed in early 2020 increasing the gas tax, the local hotel occupancy tax, and other modifications to regional revenues. However, most transportation funding on Northern Virginia does not come from the state.

Mr. Randall moved to a request for revenue and expenditure forecasts for the analysis period 2023 to 2045 from jurisdictions and local agencies. Inputs are requested by March 5. He already reached out individually in the past few days to each agency with the request and any available information from the 2018 analysis.

Mr. Brown asked if Virginia jurisdictional inputs should be sent to TPB or to VDOT staff.

Mr. Whitaker asked for a preference.

Mr. Randall responded with the recommendation that inputs be sent to both VDOT and TPB staff at the same time. He emphasized there are likely to be several iterations on the financial analysis.

Mr. Nampoothiri asked about NVTA's inputs. In his recollection from the 2018 analysis, NVTA produced one set of estimates and VDOT another, with VDOT's numbers used in the final analysis. He would like assurance on which would be used before getting his finance team to produce the required data.

Mr. Erenrich asked about the Traffic Relief Plan (TRP) and the transit revenues that are expected to come from that project through agreements currently in development. These revenues are uncertain, and he asked if MDOT in its estimates had included these. Are these revenues enough to fund Bus Rapid Transit, for instance. But these estimates have not been developed, nor have the transit projects and service that will be part of the TRP.

Ms. Snyder responded that she will reach out and set up discussions with MDOT financial representatives as needed, but this will not take place before the February 12 due date. She admitted she was unsure whether these transit routes were needed for air quality conformity.

Mr. Erenrich stated that he thought there is a need to include these routes in the long-range plan, and that he would like to talk with colleagues on the state's assumptions.

7. VISUALIZE 2045 – UPDATE INPUTS

Mr. Srikanth reviewed the transmittal memorandum for the Technical Inputs Solicitation Guide and Appendix, dated December 23, 2020. He noted that the solicitation had officially begun (with the issuance of this memo) and reviewed the final revisions to the solicitation that were made by the board to the draft that the Tech. Committee had reviewed in its December 2020 meeting and clarified TPB's understanding of these changes, including which changes were made to the introductory, or preamble, portion of the document and which were made to the list of federal and regional policy questions on the inputs form. He reviewed the due dates for inputs and said that it is important that policy questions in

input form (#32-45) be completed by the 2/12/2021 due date for all new projects noting for existing projects, the due date to review and update the responses to these questions was 4/30/2021.

During the opportunity for questions, TPB Technical Committee Member Bob Brown, of Loudoun County, noted he had emailed Srikanth TPB with comments on the Technical Inputs Solicitation, and noted concerns with the use of the term 'requires'.

Next, Andrew Austin, TPB Transportation Planner, provided a demonstration of the Project InfoTrak database application. He explained to committee members how to sign up for an account and how to navigate the application to review existing project data, create new project records, and amend project records into a new data set that would be the foundation of the 2022 update to Visualize 2045. Mr. Austin noted that some changes to questions on the form resulting from the board's discussion prior to approving the Technical Inputs Solicitation document had not been implemented yet but were expected soon.

Mr. Whitaker inquired about the status of a blank, fillable version of the form that could be made available to local jurisdictions and project managers to collect information prior to data entry in Project InfoTrak.

Mr. Austin replied that he hoped to make the form available by later that day or early the following week.

Mr. Maslanka asked for the information on signing up for accounts in Project InfoTrak to be repeated. Mr. Austin said users should sign up at www.mwcog.org/PIT and that complete instructions were available in Appendix A of the Technical Inputs Solicitation document and would be provided again in the meeting chat.

Mr. Brown asked if staff from local jurisdictions in Virginia would be granted read-only permissions to access information in Project InfoTrak.

Mr. Whitaker announced that VDOT was opening up permissions to allow staff from local jurisdictions and subregional organizations to enter new projects and edit existing project information.

Mr. Austin further noted that those staff persons would be able perform those tasks to assist VDOT in completing their data inputs, but they would not be able to submit the project information through to TPB staff, and that staff from VDOT would first review the project information and then submit projects to the MPO.

Mr. Brown commented that this would enable local agency staff to assist with updating the responses to the Regional Policy and Federal Planning Factor Support questions.

Mr. Brown asked about Change B.

Mr. Srikanth said Change B which revises the text in a "highlighted box" on Page 14 of the Solicitation document, and notes that "Through this project technical inputs solicitation process the TPB requires its member agencies to prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals as they submit their inputs for inclusion in the TPB's LRTP and TIP."

Mr. Brown asked what does the word "require" mean? Where in the Technical Inputs Solicitation Document, or application, is it required that we prioritize projects?, and by what standard? And if not stated, how is the staff and Board going to interpret the word? Does staff have an interpretation that will be presented to the Board so that there is at least a "standard" to go by when and if a member challenges a project or projects stating the project was not prioritized?

Mr. Srikanth said that this statement is in the policy portion of the document, the preamble part, and not in the project form. He said the previous version of the solicitation documents and the draft of the current version all have had this part that talks about TPB policy documents. He noted that the TPB policy documents are its Vision, RTPP, Region Forward and the recently added Aspirational Initiatives.

He said that for this round of updates to Visualize 2045, the text was updated to draw attention to the TPB's recent work activities such as the Aspirational Initiatives, the new regional GHG reduction goal, and the emphasis on equity. In this part, the TPB is drawing attention to few specific elements of its overall policy objectives reflecting the needs of the present time.

Mr. Srikanth said that the way he understands this is that the TPB recognizes that its member agencies have needs that exceed the funding it has and as such each agency has to make tough decisions in prioritizing which projects they will fund at this time; the TPB is aware that its member agencies are making these decisions, setting priorities based on the purpose and need of the projects and other policy objectives they have; the TPB acknowledges that there are many prioritization processes at state and sub-regional levels when it comes to selecting projects to advance into regional Plan; the TPB wants to ensure that its priorities are also part of the considerations in these processes when member agencies make their decisions. He said that he believes the TPB's policy priorities are consistent with those of local jurisdictions and agencies since the TPB is made up of the local jurisdictions and the TPB policy priorities are developed by its members – the state agencies, cities, counties and regional entities who are making the programming decisions.

8. VISUALIZE 2045 – PUBLIC INFO / RESOURCES

Ms. Cook reviewed new products available to its members to communicate about Visualize 2045 and the Aspirational Initiatives. She provided a brief overview of the infographics and indicated that there is a companion animated video for each infographic. These are available to TPB members use to communicate about TPB, Visualize 2045, and how local projects contribute to regional priorities, such as climate goals, mobility and accessibility. TPB staff noted that these are being shared along with the Visualize 2045 Ambassador's Kit, designed for TPB members, TPB Technical Committee members and others to help get the word out about Visualize 2045. The materials will be available online at: <https://www.mwcog.org/visualize2045/ambassadorkit/>

9. VISUALIZE 2045 – INITIAL SURVEY RESULTS AND PREVIEW OF FOCUS GROUPS

Mr. Swanson referred to the materials for his item and described the opinion survey for Visualize 2045 that was conducted last fall. He said the survey was statistically significant at the county level. He said that more than 2,400 responses had been received. He said that the survey was laid out in three broad themes, including travel during COVID, future transportation preferences (relative to TPB priorities), and future factors. He said that staff had just begun reviewing the input received but he offered some high-level findings.

Ms. Armendariz briefed the committee on a series of ten focus groups that are being conducted throughout the month of January. She said the focus groups were designed to provide additional context to the input received through the survey, and in particular, to get more expanded input from communities whose voices have not typically been as prominent in the transportation planning process, including people of color and low-income populations.

Mr. Malouff said he was pleased to hear that equity considerations were central in designing and conducting the focus groups. He asked if equity considerations were included in the survey questions.

Mr. Swanson said the survey had a specific section on equity and he further noted that cross-tabulations of other questions throughout the document can shed light on equity concerns.

Ms. Armendariz affirmed Mr. Swanson's comments, emphasizing questions in the survey that asked how well participants' needs are being met.

A question in the chat asked whether the survey was being weighted by demographic factors.

Mr. Swanson said the full survey results with those adjustments were still forthcoming.

10. FY 2022 SOLICITATION FOR TLC PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Mr. Swanson announced that the application period for the TLC Program was opened on the day of the Technical Committee meeting, January 5. He said the application deadline was March 8. He said the deadline for an optional abstract submission was January 26. He said that this year, applications were particularly encouraged that focused on implementation of projects related to the National Capital Trail Network and the Transit Access Focus Areas.

11. REGIONAL SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM KICKOFF

Mr. Schermann briefed the committee on the launch of the Regional Safety Pilot Program. He announced that the very first solicitation period for the Regional Safety Program will begin with an email announcement, including a link to the application, that will be sent on January 19. Applicants will have until March 15, 2021 to submit applications. He also noted that optional abstract can be submitted by February 12, 2021.

Mr. Schermann then described key aspects of the program including applicant eligibility, project funding limits, and the regional safety priorities to be addressed through the program. These priorities reflect key elements of the safety resolution adopted by the board in July 2020:

- Safety Improvements for Low-Income and Minority Communities
- Improving Road User Behavior
- Identifying and Designing Safety Countermeasures
- Understanding Safety Data
- Cross-Jurisdictional Safety Improvements

Mr. Schermann emphasized that he was available via email anytime to answer questions and provided a link to the Regional Safety Pilot Program web page for additional information.

OTHER ITEMS

12. OTHER BUSINESS

TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021

Staff is undertaking a study to move towards COG's 2030 climate change goals by determining a preferred option of plans and policies to move forward with.

Technical Assistance

The UPWP Technical Assistance Program which is available to assist state and local governments and transit operating agencies.

New Employee Announcements

New staffer Yue Zhang was introduced to the committee.

13. ADJOURN

No other business was brought before the committee.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT	
Mark Rawlings – DC DOT Kristin Calkins - DC Office of Planning Jason Groth – Charles County Alex Waltz – Charles County David Edmondson - City of Frederick Eric Graye – M-NCPPC/Montgomery County Kari Snyder – MDOT Winstina Hughes – SHA Kyle Nembhard – MTA Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Jim Maslanka – Alexandria Dan Malouff – Arlington County Chole Ritter – City of Fairfax	Malcolm Watson – Fairfax County Robert Brown – Loudoun County Chloe Delhomme – City of Manassas Sree Nampoothiri – NVTA Meagan Landis – Prince William County Betsy Massie – PRTC Norman Whitaker – VDOT Regina Moore - VDOT Ciara Williams – VDRPT Toff Horsley – VDRPT Katherine Mark Phillips – WMATA
OTHERS / MWCOG STAFF PRESENT	
Katherine Youngbluth - DRPT Alex Brun – MDE Jess Cohn Virginia Burke Andrea Lasker – Prince George’s County Kanti Srikanth Lyn Erickson Tim Canan Andrew Meese Mark Moran Paul DesJardin Stacy Cook John Swanson Jon Schermann	Andrew Austin Dusan Vuksan Abigail Zenner Karen Armendariz Leo Pineda Sergio Ritacco Nazneen Ferdous Nick Suarez Tony Castaneda Arianna Koudounas Charlene Howard Greg Goodwin James Li Jessica Mirr Jinchul Park Bill Bacon Nicole McCall Ray Ngo Sarah Bond