
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**
Hybrid

March 21, 2024

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *IN-PERSON*

Christina Henderson – TPB Chair - DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg
Haley Peckett – Montgomery County
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County
Monique Ashton - Rockville
Drew Morrison – MDOT
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Meagan Landis – Prince William County
Maria Sinner – VDOT

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *ONLINE*

Matt Frumin – DC Council
Amanda Stout – DDOT
Anna Chamberlin - DDOT
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning
Mati Bzurto – Bowie
Reuben Collins – Charles County
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Kristen Weaver – Greenbelt
Tim Miller - Laurel
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County
Shana Fulcher – Takoma Park
Heather Murphy – MDOT
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Tom Ross – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
Dave Snyder – Falls Church
Mike Turner – Loudoun County
Rob Donaldson – Loudoun County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Bill Cuttler – VDOT
David Marsden – Virginia Senate
Allison Davis – WMATA
Sandra Jackson – FHWA
Julia Koster – NCPC

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Andrew Meese
Mark Moran
Tim Canan

Dan Sheehan
Leo Pineda
John Swanson
Sergio Ritacco
Rachel Beyerle
Deborah Etheridge
Kim Sutton
Jamie Bufkin
Cristina Finch
Andrew Austin
Amanda Lau
Jane Posey
Dusan Vuksan
Laura Bachle
Lindsey Martin
Kenneth Derryberry
Bill Bacon
Amy Garbarini – Technical Committee Chair, DRPT
Ra Amin – CAC Chair
Christine Hoeffner - VRE
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County
Richard Wallace – CAC
Hana Fouladi – DC Council
Samual Brooks – DDOT
Madeline Hairfield – DDOT
Meredith Soniat – DDOT
Max Shatzen – Virginia Senate
Kari Snyder – MDOT
Drew Morrison - VDOT
Bryan Campbell – VDOT
Dale Castellow – VDOT
Regina Moore - VDOT
Haley Peckett - MCDOT
Michael Weil - NCPC
Hannah Pajewski – NOVA
Malcolm Watson – Fairfax County
Michael Guarino – Fairfax County
Mike Garcia – Fairfax County
Evandro Santos – Prince William County
Philippe Simon – Alexandria
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Sally W. Stolz – Don't Widen 270
Bill Orleans – public
Jason Stanford – NVTA
Brian Ditzler – Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation
Margaret Schoop – Tame Coalition
Michael Miller – Insight Transportation Consulting Inc.
Bill Pugh – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Barbara Coufal – Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
Stewart Schwartz - Coalition for Smarter Growth

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

Chair Henderson said the meeting would be conducted in a hybrid format (combined in-person and virtual). She described the procedures for conducting the meeting. She thanked members for agreeing to meet a day later than normally scheduled to accommodate a DC Council scheduling problem.

Lyn Erickson conducted a roll call. Attendance for the meeting can be found on the first pages of the minutes. She confirmed there was a quorum. She said that a number of people had signed up to provide comments in person.

Barbara Coufal, with Citizens Against Beltway Expansion, urged the TPB to remove the Southside express lanes and the expansions of I 495 and I-270 in Montgomery County from Visualize 2050.

Brian Ditzler, Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation, said that most of what was submitted for Visualize 2050 was not consistent with TPB's principles and goals and did not comply with TPB's updated policy for evaluating projects and their alternatives. He urged this board to pause the development of Visualize 2050 and require member transportation departments to comply with TPB's updated process.

Jason Stanford, president of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, said the projects in Visualize 2050 represent Virginia's commitment to expanding the capacity of our multimodal transportation network that supports the growing housing and economic development needs of our community. He urged leaders in D.C. and Maryland to follow Virginia's example by investing in infrastructure that expands the capacity of our transportation network.

Sally Stolz, from Rockville, spoke in opposition to the inclusion in Visualize 2050 of the I-495/270 express toll lanes project. She urged the removal of the project from the plan.

Margaret Schoap, Coalition for Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended, expressed her organization's appreciation to the TPB for the removal of the proposed Mid-County Highway from the Visualize 2045 update.

Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth, said the TPB should take the opportunity to meet the vision laid in COG's Region Forward Plan along with the TPB's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030, along with the zero-based budgeting approach for the long-range plan update in order to meet the TPB's climate goals. Based on those goals and plans, he said the inputs for Visualize 2050 are a major disappointment.

Lyn Erickson said that between noon February 20th, and noon March 20th, the TPB received ten comments via email. A summary as well as each comment can be found on the website. She went through each comment quickly:

- Victoria Waskowicz, Seminary Road Committee, provided comments in support of the transportation study funding for Seminary Road.
- Tad Aburn submitted comments on behalf of a D.C. EJ Coalition, said the D.C. Council's Environmental Justice Amendments Act of 2023 need to be built into Visualize 2050.
- Cheri Conga, with the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, called for reductions in per capita vehicle miles travel to meet COG's greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- Barbara Ditzler, with the League of Women Voters of Maryland, expressed concern and skepticism about some projects in the current public comment period that have greenhouse gas reduction boxes checked.

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- Brian Ditzler, with Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation, requested that the TPB pause the development of Visualize 2050 and require members to comply with the board's updated processes.
 - Margaret Schoap, with the TAME Coalition, expressed appreciation to the TPB for removing the proposed Mid-County Highway Extension from the Visualize 2045 update and for removing two final sections of the proposed Mid-County Highway Extension from Visualize 2050.
 - Rick Rybeck, with Just Economics and a member of the TPB's Community Advisory Committee, submitted comments about how important it is that Visualize 2050 strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that is environmentally and fiscally sustainable.
 - Barbara Coufal, with Citizens Against Beltway Expansion, submitted comments requesting that the TPB remove the Southside express lanes and I-495 and I-270 toll lanes from Visualize 2050.
 - Sally Stolz, with Don't Widen 270.org, expressed concerns about the extension of Virginia's managed lanes and Maryland's I-495/270 express lanes project.
 - Bill Pugh, with the Coalition for Smarter Growth, submitted comments stating that the Visualize 2050 conformity inputs do not comply with board resolution R19-2021. He noted that too many proposed projects increase carbon emissions and fail to meet TPB, COG, state, and local climate goals.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Henderson moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Morrison and was approved unanimously.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporting on behalf of Technical Committee Chair Amy Gabarini, Lyn Erickson said the Technical Committee met on March 1. She said the committee reviewed items 7, 8, 9, and 10, which covered the approval of Virginia TAP funding, the Unified Planning Work Program snapshot, along with an overview of the Commuter Connections Work Program. She said the committee received the same briefing on the long-range plan update that was the subject of the TPB morning work session.

Lyn Erickson said the Technical Committee reviewed additional items not on the TPB agenda, including MDOT's Carbon Reduction Program, the 2023 Continuous Airport Systems Planning Ground Access Travel Time Study, the high-capacity transit local (HCT) local transit access study, and a presentation on implementation considerations for on-road transportation greenhouse gas reductions strategies.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT & ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted report, Ra Amin said the CAC met on April 14. The committee received briefings on the TPB's work on resilience and on public outreach related to the update of Visualize 2050. He said the committee offered comments and suggestions on these two presentations and related TPB activities.

Referring the posted report, James Walkinshaw said the Access for All Advisory Committee met on April 11. He said the group discussed the approved 2023 Enhanced Mobility Grant Awards, the Virginia TAP funding projects, and TPB's Visualize 2050 public comment period activities.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Kanti Srikanth said he would save time not discussing the information in the posted material that was made previously made available to the board. He noted a few things that were not in the report.

- The Commuter Connections program has just reviewed nominations for its annual employer recognition awards. The award selection panel was chaired by James Walkinshaw. The awards will be announced later this year.
- The region just submitted, on behalf of the Metropolitan Statistical Area, a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), which is one of the key requirements for the carbon reduction program grant fund. The submission of that plan will allow each of the TPB member jurisdictions to apply for federal grants if they wish to implement a project or a program that is in the PCAP.
- EPA has recently finalized a new and more stringent emission standards for new light-duty and Medium duty vehicles. These standards will lead to less NOx, particulate matter, and greenhouse gas emissions, starting with model year 2027 vehicles.
- The Fairfax County Department of Transportation recently received the League of American Bicyclists Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Business recognition.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Henderson called attention to Item 10 on the agenda, which would be an overview of the development of Visualize 2050. She said that when the TPB kicked off this process in June of 2022 the board in essence was asking each of the region's transportation agencies to reexamine every single project that was proposed in the past to determine if they are they actually needed today and if these the best ways to achieve our goals in terms of increased mobility.

Chair Henderson said the current public comment period on the plan inputs began on March 1 and would conclude at the end of March. She said that comments received would be reviewed in April and into May, and the board would vote at its May meeting on whether to include the inputs in the forthcoming air quality conformity analysis. She urged all members to take a look at the document to see the projects in their jurisdiction that were included and meet with agency staff to discuss the inputs. She said it was important that the members take the next 45 days to have conversations with staff in order to make improvements. She said she wants to make sure that the TPB remains on track to accomplish what the board set out to do in 2021, which is to develop an improved set of transportation projects for the region.

ACTION ITEMS

7. APPROVAL OF FY 2025 AND FY 2026 TAP FUNDING FOR PROJECTS IN VIRGINIA

John Swanson presented a set of projects in Virginia being recommended by a selection committee and staff that will receive a portion of the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TA Set-Aside) funds.

Kanti Srikanth clarified that the District of Columbia as well as Maryland have similar funds to award and those will be received later.

John Swanson noted that the District's TA Set-Aside projects will be presented later this year, and that Virginia is on a two-year cycle.

John Swanson said that there are 15 projects in Northern Virginia for which the TPB staff are asking for approval. He stated that these are projects that are going to make it safer for kids to walk to school, make it easier for people to access trails for transportation and recreation, and help people in historically disadvantaged communities, many of whom don't have cars, use sidewalks and trails, or walk and bike to get to transit and to their everyday needs.

John Swanson said the program got a big increase this year thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill. He stated that the recommended VA TA Set-Aside projects for the TPB's approval total nearly \$20 million in projects, which is three times the amount of money approved two years ago.

John Swanson presented background on the federal program and presented some of the responses from the *Voices of the Region* survey. He said that 35 percent of people surveyed said they would be likely or willing to walk or bike to transit if there were better crosswalks, and 31 percent said they'd be willing to bike if there were trails or paths near their home. He stated that 63 percent said they support more funding for new or wider sidewalks.

John Swanson mentioned that the TPB is taking action because it is a federal requirement. He stated that as a large MPO, the TPB receives a suballocation, so the TPB staff come to the TPB for project funding approval for DC, Maryland, and Virginia, on a separate basis.

John Swanson said that the Virginia project selection is a little complicated because the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) plays a very specific role. He said that the CTB district is responsible for project allocation for a certain amount of money, the TPB has responsibility for another sub-allocation, and then there are statewide funds. He stated that the TPB staff worked closely with Mary Hynes at the CTB district to pool the CTB and TPB funds, identify the projects for join funding, and split them between the two funding sources.

John Swanson identified the regional policies used in the panel's consideration in his presentation noting that they align with the policies and the plans that this board has adopted over a number of years. He said that the panel looked at 24 applications and is seeking approval of 15 projects. He stated that if everything were funded it would have been almost \$39 million. The TPB suballocation was 19.5 million, and the CTB had a suballocation of 4.1. TPB and CTB are jointly allocating the funding. He acknowledged Mary Hynes and Virginia DOT staff, noting their collaboration on project recommendations. John Swanson presented the project recommendations which are detailed in the staff report. He noted that eight of the projects are in or very close to Equity Emphasis Areas, eleven of the projects are in or connected to the National Capital Trail Network, and nine are Safe Routes to School program activities.

John Swanson presented a few examples, including:

- Prince William County - Regional Roadway Safety Program Graham Park Road sidewalk and crosswalks.
- North Berlin (Lovettsville) - Shared use path- part of the National Capital Trail Network near the Brunswick MARC station.
- Alexandria - Safe Routes to School Curb Extensions projects, including crosswalks, bulb-outs, median refuges, and ADA-focused improvements.
- Manassas Park - Manassas Drive sidewalk improvements; a walk to transit project including a sidewalk link near the VRE station, building on a TLC project from last year.

John Swanson said that staff is seeking adoption of the resolution that is in the board packet and working with Virginia DOT on project approval.

Chair Henderson moved to adopt Resolution R8-2024 to approve projects for funding under the federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside program for FY 2025 and FY 2026 for Virginia TPB jurisdictions. Maria Sinner seconded the motion. No further questions were asked. The board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution R8-2024 to approve projects for funding under the Federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program for FY 2025 and FY 2026 for Virginia TPB jurisdictions.

8. AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM, FY 2024 CARRYOVER FUNDING TO FY 2025, AND APPROVAL OF THE FY 2025 UPWP

Lyn Erickson gave a summary on two actions the Board needed to take on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): an amendment to the plan to remove certain projects and budgets and an associated action on the budget to carry over funds to FY 2025. She said that the UPWP is an annual work statement that identifies planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. She stated that in February, the board was briefed on the amendment to the FY 2024 UPWP and associated FY 2024 carryover funding to FY 2025.

Lyn Erickson reminded board members that she presented the bulk of the UPWP in January, including the main activities and that in February, more detail was presented on the actual tasks, work products, and funding.

Lyn Erickson confirmed that the funding is set with a total at \$25 million and in order to get to \$25 million, a budget amendment is required on the current UPWP. She referred to a board memo she provided in February on the carryover. She stated that the February memo detailed two activities that will not be completed by June 3, 2024.

Lyn Erickson said that after the board takes these actions, she will submit the UPWP to the U.S. Department of Transportation for their approval, which usually occurs by June. She stated that funding authorizations are also needed from DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and VDRPT with work starting on July 1, 2024. Christina Henderson made a motion to adopt R9-2024 to approve the amendment for the current fiscal year work program, the FY 2024 UPWP, the FY 2024 budget, and the carryover funding to FY 2025. James Walkinshaw seconded the motion.

There were no questions. The board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution R9-2024 to approve the amendment to the FY 2024 UPWP and the FY 2024 carryover funding to FY 2025.

Chair Christina Henderson made a motion to adopt Resolution R10-2024 to approve the FY 2025 UPWP, the work activities and the budget for our next fiscal year. James Walkinshaw seconded the motion.

There were no questions.

The board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution R10-2024 to approve the FY 2025 UPWP.

9. APPROVAL OF THE FY 2025 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM (CCWP)

Daniel Sheehan presented for TPB approval, the FY 2025 Commuter Connections Work Program. He stated that the work program, as presented to the board in February, includes work products, services, and budgets associated with the regional Commuter Connections transportation demand management program.

Daniel Sheehan stated that the Commuter Connections Work Program was developed by TPB staff alongside District DOT, Maryland DOT, and Virginia DOT staff. He stated that each state DOT provides funding to the program, and for FY 2025, this totals \$7.7 million. He noted that the draft work program was presented to the TPB technical committee and the board in February and that no recommended revisions were received.

Daniel Sheehan said that with approval, the Commuter Connections Work Program will commence on July 1. He issued the staff recommendation that the TPB adopt Resolution R11-2024.

Chair Christina Henderson made a motion to adopt Resolution R11-2024 to approve the FY 2025 Commuter Connections Work Program. Neil Harris seconded the motion.

There were no questions.

The board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution R11-2024, approving the FY 2025 Commuter Connections Work Program.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

10. VISUALIZE 2050: BRIEFING ON PROJECT INPUTS AND DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS FOR THE VISUALIZE 2050 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND THE FY 2026-2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), AND WORK SESSION RECAP

Kanti Srikanth, in introductory remarks on the agenda item, stated that the current update to the long-range transportation plan is unique and significant in that the TPB's transportation plan database of projects has been built over a long period of time. He said that with Visualize 2050 this is the first time when the entire database has been cleared out and returned to the TPB transportation agencies who have been asked to reexamine all the projects in the current plan, determine if the projects are still appropriate to meet the needs they were designed to fulfill or decide if there are other ways in which those needs could be met. He noted that this work has taken a significant time commitment of the staffs at state and local transportation agencies and the TPB. He thanked all staff for the long hours and detailed work to repopulate the long range plan database and their patience working with the new software.

Kanti Srikanth said that there are close to 200 projects in the current Visualize 2045 plan and 700 different project segments in the current TPB plan, and the members reexamined these projects over the past 12 months. He said that 19 of the 24 TPB member agencies have provided inputs from reexamining the projects, and the TPB staff worked to develop a summary of about 160 projects with its 600 odd segments. He stated that the TPB staff has posted a correction to the location of HOT lanes in Maryland that showed an error in some segments of the HOT lanes. He stated the project description that was incorrectly described has now been corrected and posted. He said that during the March public comment period TPB staff will continue to review all of the documents to make necessary corrections.

Cristina Finch presented key information on the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan that will be used to complete the air quality analysis of the 25-year plus plan and the related four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She shared the project input schedule and said that there will be one more comment period in 2025 with an aim to complete and have approval of the Visualize 2050 plan in June 2025.

Cristina Finch presented information on the TPB's methods used to getting the word out about the comment period and highlighted the MetroQuest form available on the Visualize 2050 website. She stated that the air quality conformity project input table and scope of work are the main documents supporting the March comment period because those are the documents the TPB will be asked to approve in May. She stated that the board will be asked to approve the conformity project inputs table that lists every conformity segment portion of a project coded into the model.

Cristina Finch said that the MetroQuest form is available on the website. She said the form includes an introduction, an air quality diagram, project inputs information, and a wrap-up page with demographic questions. She stated that the form focuses on the capacity-impacting projects that are adding or removing vehicle capacity, which represents about 20 percent of the expenditures in the financial plan. She said that regionally significant projects without reasonably anticipated funding will not be included in the conformity analysis or the financial plan, and they will not be included in Visualize 2050 as a construction or implementation projects, but they may be listed as a study and not coded in the conformity table. She noted that projects that are not regionally significant, such as trails and intersections, state of good repair projects, and operations costs will be part of the overall financial plan as required under the Visualize 2050 plan.

Cristina Finch highlighted two of the 14 priority strategies that the TPB has developed. She said that one priority is to expand express lanes and mentioned existing toll lanes in the region and additional express toll lanes proposed in Maryland and Virginia. She highlighted a second priority strategy in expanding bus rapid transit (BRT) and streetcars. She stated that existing BRT systems are present in Arlington County, Alexandria, and Montgomery County with proposed BRT in the District, Maryland, and Virginia and the Purple Line rail in Maryland and extension of the Benning Road Streetcar in DC.

Cristina Finch said that each project sponsor had the opportunity to answer how they thought their project aligned with federal planning factors and marking these factors on their project forms. She said that TPB staff did an analysis of how the marked federal planning factors would translate to supporting a TPB goal. She presented a slide showing the alignment and cross section of the planning factors and TPB goals. She noted that more than 75 percent of projects support the TPB's reliability, affordability, and convenience goals with transit projects often supporting the TPB's livable and prosperous communities goals and road projects almost always supporting safety goals.

Cristina Finch stated that the states have responded to the 2023 public comment period on the projects undergoing resubmission and have submitted letters that were posted on the website. She said that some Visualize 2045 projects are no longer priorities and have not been resubmitted for Visualize 2050. She commented that there are 13 new projects in DC, 17 new projects in Virginia, and no new projects in Maryland. She stated that implementing agencies that have reported that most air quality conformity-impacting projects do not include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Cristina Finch asked TPB members to help spread the word about the comment period and the Visualize2050.org website and reminded member agencies that this is an opportunity to review the project information and make sure everything is reflected as they would like the project reflected. She said that in next steps, TPB staff will provide the board with the results of the comment period at the April TPB meeting and ask for action at the May meeting on the air quality conformity project inputs table and scope of work.

David Snyder thanked staff and asked if a record will be kept of the questions and answers from the morning work session. He asked about the public comment website and whether there is any place where people can make general comments.

Cristina Finch said that the comment form has an opportunity to provide written comment on any project. She stated that there are also comment bubbles provided on certain screens of the comment form for the public to provide general comments. She said there are other ways to comment if more lengthy information needs to be shared and encouraged people to email or provide a letter if more extensive comment is needed.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB will document the discussions and comments received during the Visualize 2050 work session and will share that information with the board at the next TPB meeting.

Gary Erenrich said that because of discussion and confusion about the I-495/I-270 project, he requested that in the April TPB meeting that Maryland DOT be allowed to clarify changes to the project and provide an update.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB could provide time on the agenda. He described the Maryland HOT lanes project that is in Visualize 2045, the current plan, as HOT lanes being added on the Virginia side of the Beltway starting at and including the American Legion Bridge and continuing up to and along the I-270 spur and along I-270 to I-370 then through to Frederick. He stated that the Visualize 2050 proposal is HOT lanes on the Capital Beltway from the American Legion Bridge including the bridge to the I-270 spur and then along I-270 to I-370 just adding one lane and converting the existing lane into HOT lanes but nothing beyond I-370.

Gary Erenrich commented that seeing a picture or map of how the project is laid out and the schedule would be appreciated, particularly in Frederick County and Montgomery County where there is concern about the status from I-370 to Frederick and that segment is supposed to be a study.

Kanti Srikanth said that one other change to the Maryland project is that it was originally proposed as a public/private project and that is no longer the proposal because now there is no private sector contribution.

Monique Ashton thanked TPB staff for the correction about the Maryland HOT lanes project and said that she agrees that there is still confusion in the community as to what the project entails. She stated that pages 4 and 6 of the corrected document is not written in a way that clearly articulates the change. She commented that expanded lanes and toll lanes are two different topics. She said that Rockville has 12 lanes and already has an express lane that is currently not a toll lane, so it would be helpful to understand if there has been a change from the information shared regarding a toll lane in that segment. She requested that the project be clarified for the community.

Monique Ashton asked how the TPB is evaluating the air quality index for some projects given that WMATA, for example, is cutting or potentially cutting several bus lines. She stated that if the region is seeing potential cuts in mass transit that might cause more car trips, how will that be evaluated in terms of air quality goals.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB staff will clarify the project description for all the localities to use for outreach to residents. He stated that, regarding air quality and changes to the transportation system such as bus routes or service frequencies, the TPB conducts an air quality conformity analysis that looks to the future for the next 25 years and entails what emissions in our region will be strictly from an on-road sector and compares the results to a federally approved level. He stated that COG works with state air agencies to monitor air quality throughout the region by collecting data which is EPA reviewed and certified which corresponds to the current conditions. He said those data provide a more immediate assessment of air quality reflecting current travel patterns and services. He said the regionally published air quality index is based on these monitored readings.

Monique Ashton stated that from the public's perspective, they see potential cutbacks in mass transit and a potential focus on non-mass transit investments, and it worries residents and environmentalists. She said this should be watched if the TPB is to meet its goals.

Drew Morrison stated appreciation for Montgomery County's request to talk about the process at the next meeting because it is important to look at what happens in the region long-term and look at where resources are being placed now in terms of project advancement. He stated that the American Legion Bridget to the I-270 spur to the Montgomery Mall area is the construction focus of the Maryland HOT lanes, and the study focus is on the I-270 North section. He stated that for the area above the Intercounty Connector or I-370 to Frederick, Maryland DOT is happy to talk about the middle section of the project and how that plays out in regional modeling and what next steps the Maryland DOT is taking as not only a roadway project but a multimodal program that has been evaluated and advanced over the past few months.

Drew Morrison said that April will be a good check-in point, but there will be more conversations about potential direction of the project, policy choices around the delivery method, and how transit and transportation alternatives are advanced on the corridors. He stated that Maryland has a number of important projects, and some are important to the Maryland administration that are in the study phase such as the southern Maryland rapid transit project. He commented that some projects, depending on phase, may not be seen here [in Visualize 2050] but there are things that Maryland DOT will work on collaboratively with partners to advance into future plans.

Matt Frumin asked about the public comments on the toll road proposed for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the potential conflict with a potential extension of the Blue Line. He asked how the TPB will take into account potential conflicts in the future between a proposal in one place where there might be another proposal in the same place at a different time. He asked how that is balanced and how does that work into how staff analyzes proposals.

Kanti Srikanth responded that the public comment was on the Virginia I-495 South project which proposes extending HOT lanes on the Virginia Beltway from Springfield all the way to Woodrow Wilson Bridge. He stated that the comment was that the region has been envisioning having Metrorail cross the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and reach parts of Maryland; however, there has been no decision or funding for the project. He stated that the comment's context was if Virginia is now going to use that middle median space on its Beltway, would that create a challenge for a Metrorail extension.

Kanti Srikanth said that Virginia DOT has indicated that when a Metrorail extension across Woodrow Wilson Bridge comes into a planning and programming phase, they are willing to work with the region and with Metro to see how they would be able to make space for it.

Maria Sinner said that Virginia DOT is planning the project not to preclude future rail on the bridge, and when the bridge was built, it was envisioned to hold the weight of rail. She stated that VDOT is monitoring and coordinating with WMATA on the long-range plan of the Blue, Yellow, and Silver lines, but the current NEPA work on the Southside project does not include rail but that does not preclude for rail to be included in the future.

Matt Frumin asked whether work would be completed and then would have to be torn out to place rail over the bridge.

Maria Sinner said that when the Metrorail line becomes a plan, Virginia DOT will have to coordinate with WMATA to see how to accommodate their alignment.

James Walkinshaw said that this project concern is one that many in Northern Virginia have, and there will continue to be a robust dialogue on this topic. He said that one of the commenters earlier raised the issue of the potential contract to operate the toll lanes and ensuring that a potential future contract does not make it more difficult to convert one of the lanes for Metro's use in the future.

Victor Weissberg expressed concern with the use of the bridge for any purpose other than what it was intended for and has concerns because the nature of tolling projects is that they tend to have long-term contracts. He stated that another concern is that there does not seem to be an adequate study of likely bottlenecks at the end of the project.

Maria Sinner noted the comment.

Kelly Russell said that she would be remiss if she did not take the opportunity to express that it is a City of Frederick priority to have the section of I-270 north of I-370 widened before a bottleneck is created along that segment.

Chair Christina Henderson asked what the process will be should there be an overwhelming opposition to a handful of projects based on comments. She asked if there was a process for amending the project list or is the vote a yes or no vote for everything.

Kanti Srikanth said that the board has the prerogative to make line-item changes to the project table that they will review in May. He stated that if there are projects that the board collectively feels it cannot support to proceed further, the TPB board can leave those projects behind and move on the rest that are ready.

11. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:59 P.M. The next meeting will be on April 17, 2024.