
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

April 15, 2021

Elisa Walton, CAC Chair

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to the TPB met on Thursday, April 15 for a virtual meeting. The committee received briefings on Visualize 2045 and the public comment period that is currently underway for the plan update. Also, at the meeting, staff briefed the CAC on three TPB technical assistance programs and the upcoming TPB agenda.

VISUALIZE 2045 OVERVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

TPB Transportation Planner Stacy Cook briefed the committee on Visualize 2045. She showed a video about the plan, gave background information, and reviewed the federal requirements and regional policies the plan is based on. She highlighted the two main parts of the plan, the constrained element, which includes a subset of regional projects that must be included in the federally required air quality conformity analysis, and the 'rest' of the plan, which includes goals and discusses challenges. The rest of the plan will also communicate public opinion and report regional strategies to help the TPB and its member agencies address its many policy priorities. She reviewed themes staff are exploring like equity and how to plan for uncertainty and provided information about planned public outreach that will be coming up during the development of the Visualize 2045 update.

Community Engagement Specialist Karen Armendariz reviewed the public comment period for the Visualize 2045 update conformity projects. She reviewed where the materials could be found and how to comment.

VISUALIZE 2045 COMMITTEE DISCUSSION: EQUITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CAC members had two main concerns generally focused on equity and climate change. Committee members noted that equity should be woven throughout the plan and not be reserved as a separate topic area. Ms. Cook assured the committee that staff have been discussing how to incorporate equity into every aspect of the plan.

On the topic of climate change, CAC members asked about how the plan will address climate in both the plan as a whole and in the constrained element. Some questions focused on emerging technology and how a rise in electric vehicle use can reduce climate change but make congestion worse. Other questions focused on the conformity projects currently out for public comment, asking how the region will meet its climate goals if the projects in the plan have not changed much since the 2018 plan. Other members asked about how the projects will help reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

Ms. Cook explained that there are significant challenges in developing transportation projects in the face of the many constraints including current land use, transportation demand, funding, and competing needs. With these constraints in mind, the region is also committed to working together to address critical concerns such as climate change and equity. She also explained the air quality conformity analysis is for the purposes of demonstrating compliance and therefore must be based on defensible assumptions and validated data, rather than recent short term trends, such as telework levels assumed during the pandemic. She also explained that transportation projects take

time and the projects in the plan come from approved projects on the state and local level, therefore, projects cannot be quickly supplanted in the constrained element.

THREE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Transportation Planner John Swanson reviewed three technical assistance programs offered by the TPB, the Transportation Land-use Connections (TLC) program, the Regional Safety Program, and the Transit within Reach Program. Each of these three programs provide technical assistance to small jurisdictional projects through consultant support. He then reviewed the recommended TLC projects that will be up for approval at the April TPB meeting. In general, the committee expressed interest in these programs and how they further regional priorities.

A committee member expressed concern that these programs might be focusing too exclusively on high-capacity transit (HCT) station areas. He noted that some Activity Centers, particularly in the outer jurisdictions do not have HCT. Mr. Swanson said this is a valid comment. He said the TLC Program over the years has sought to be flexible by funding projects in a variety of different locations. For example, one project recommended for FY 2022, in Falls Church, focuses on access to a high-frequency bus center, which technically is not HCT, although it was designated a Transit Access Focus Area by the TPB last year.

Another committee member asked how equity concerns are incorporated into the selection of projects for these programs. Mr. Swanson answered that equity is considered in two ways. First, staff determines whether or not projects are in/close to the TPB’s Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs). Second, staff and the selection panel discuss how effectively potential projects would serve disadvantaged populations whether they are in EEAs or not.

OTHER BUSINESS

Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director, walked the committee through the April TPB agenda.

ATTENDEES

Members	
Elisa Walton, CAC chair	Katherine Kortum
Ashley Hutson	Michael Arston
Dan Papiernik	Nancy Abeles
Delia Houseal	Ra Amin
Delishia Pittman	Robert Jackson
Eyal Li	Ron Sktz
Jeff Jamawat	Solomon Haile
Jeff Parnes	Michael Arston
Guests	
Bill Pugh	
Tony Giancola	
Staff	
Abigail Zenner	Stacy Cook
John Swanson	Lyn Erickson
Karen Armendariz	Arianna Koudounas