

visualize2045

A LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION



Photo credit: Mr. TinDC/Flickr

Seven Transportation Initiatives for a Better Future

Visualize 2045 is a new kind of long-range transportation plan for the National Capital Region. It shows the projects and other improvements the region's transportation agencies expect to be able to afford between now and 2045, as well as the types of projects they would build if they had more funding.

In 2017, while developing Visualize 2045, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) looked at more than 80 projects, programs, and policies that are not currently funded, but could potentially address key challenges the region is facing. Some of these ideas were packaged into "initiatives" that were analyzed for their impacts on future transportation conditions.

Based upon analysis and discussion, the TPB endorsed seven initiatives in early 2018 for future concerted action and inclusion in the aspirational element of Visualize 2045. The TPB noted that these ideas, if funded and enacted, would have the potential to significantly improve the region's transportation system performance compared to current plans and programs.

The seven Aspirational Initiatives are:

- Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together
- Expand Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways
- Move More People on Metrorail
- Provide More Telecommuting and Other Options for Commuting
- Expand Express Highway Network
- Improve Walk and Bike Access to Transit
- Complete the National Capital Trail

The following pages provide more detail on each Aspirational Initiative and offer example projects, programs, and policies that align with the initiatives.

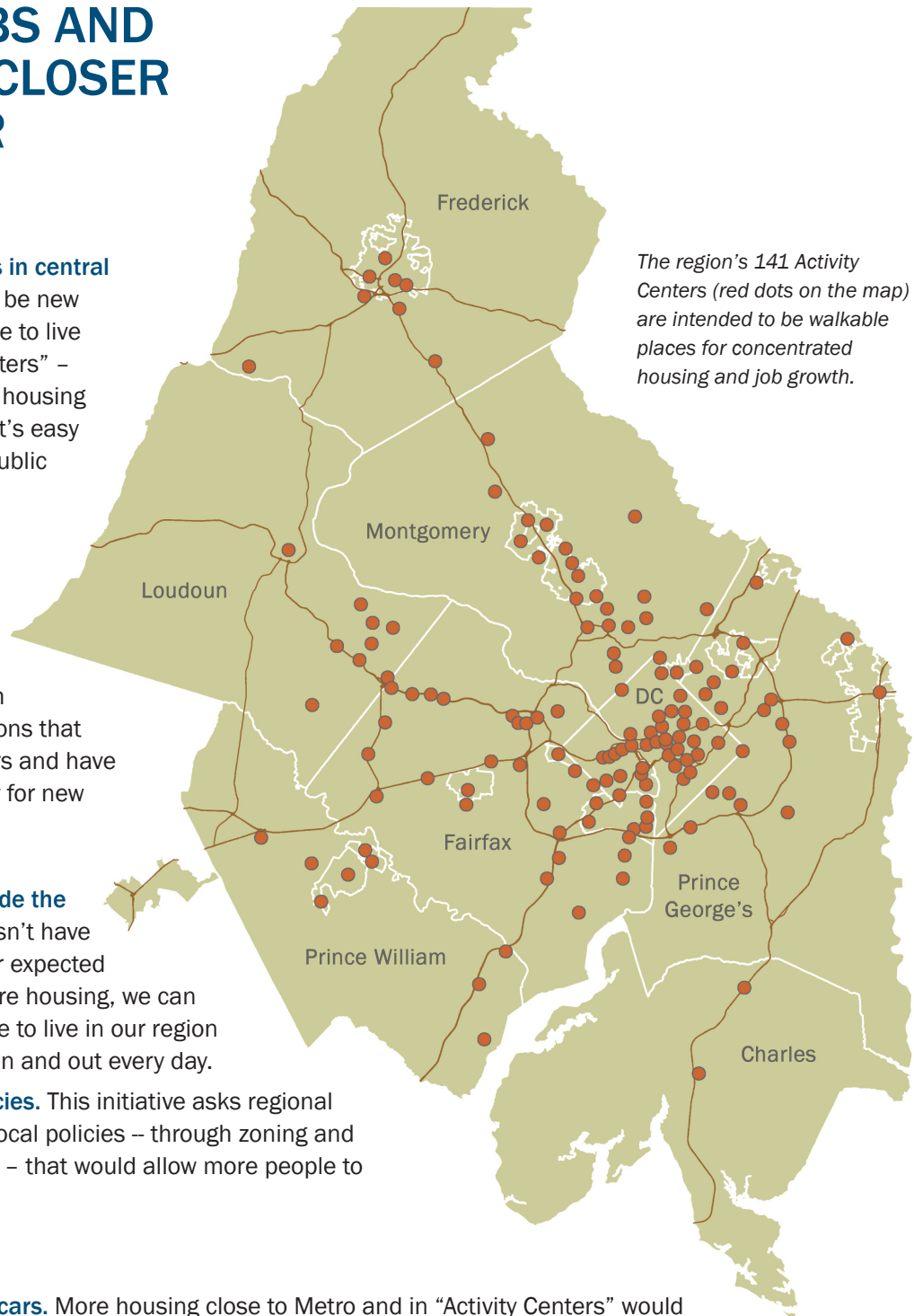


→ BRING JOBS AND HOUSING CLOSER TOGETHER

What is it?

- **More housing and jobs in central locations.** There would be new opportunities for people to live or work in “Activity Centers” – places where jobs and housing are concentrated and it’s easy to walk, bike, or take public transit.
- **Taking advantage of underused Metro stations.** Local planning efforts would encourage housing and job growth close to Metrorail stations that aren’t as busy as others and have available space nearby for new construction.
- **Reduced traffic from commuting from outside the region.** Our region doesn’t have enough housing for our expected growth. By building more housing, we can encourage more people to live in our region instead of commuting in and out every day.
- **Coordinated local policies.** This initiative asks regional leaders to coordinate local policies – through zoning and revisions in local plans – that would allow more people to live closer to jobs.

The region’s 141 Activity Centers (red dots on the map) are intended to be walkable places for concentrated housing and job growth.



“Visualize” the future:

- **Fewer, shorter trips in cars.** More housing close to Metro and in “Activity Centers” would let more people walk to work and transit. That means there would be fewer cars on our region’s roads. And that would significantly reduce congestion, making driving more reliable for those who commute by car.
- **Increased economic opportunity.** More jobs would be available to more people within a short distance from home – which is particularly important for low-income workers and those without cars.
- **Vibrant communities.** Imagine being able to walk and bike to work, school, errands, and fun. It’s good for our health and for the environment. More household growth concentrated in central locations would help us achieve that future.



Photo credit: Beyond DC/Flickr

➔ EXPAND BUS RAPID TRANSIT AND TRANSITWAYS

What is it?

- **Buses that feel like rail.** Bus-rapid transit (BRT) in suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and D.C. would provide high-quality transit services that approach the speed of rail, but at a fraction of the cost to build.
- **A dramatically expanded transit service.** Express bus, streetcar, and light rail systems would be available for more people in more places throughout the region.
- **Targeted rail projects.** Streetcar and light rail routes would provide targeted connections within the regionwide system, serving high-density locations and promoting economic development.

“Visualize” the future:

- **A diversity of transit options.** Imagine having access to express transit, even if you live or work far from a Metrorail station. Fast and reliable transit now comes in many shapes and forms, and in the future, this initiative would provide an abundance of options. BRT buses would operate in their own separated lanes with pre-payment systems and level boarding to get people on and off quickly.
- **More access to jobs.** Along with new transit comes access to new opportunities. BRT, light rail, and streetcars would not only connect the region’s many “Activity Centers” – our economic engines – but would also help people move around within them. More transit would provide new travel options for scores of people who currently struggle to get to and from work.
- **Better bike/ped access.** New buses and rail encourage walking and bicycling. To maximize the benefit of new transit services, we need to make sure people can get to and from stations on sidewalks, paths and bike lanes safely.

➔ MOVE MORE PEOPLE ON METRORAIL

What is it?

- **Moving more people through the center of the region.** To move more people on Metrorail, there would be more trains and lines, and stations would be expanded. The focus would be on the downtown core of the region to accommodate more riders where stations and trains are overcrowded.
- **Longer trains.** In the near-term future, eight-car trains (instead of six-car trains) would run on all lines at all times.
- **Expanded stations.** Stations at the heart of the system would be expanded to handle new riders with less crowding. These changes would include expanded mezzanines and new fare gates and escalators.
- **A second station in Rosslyn.** The addition of a second Rosslyn station to increase the frequency of Orange, Blue, and Silver Line trains would relieve a system bottleneck that slows down commutes throughout the region.
- **A new inner loop.** A new loop rail line across the Potomac River (via a new Rosslyn tunnel) would connect Virginia to Georgetown, and on to Union Station.

“Visualize” the future:

- **Dependability.** With Metro restored to an excellent state of good repair, imagine more trains, running more often, with stations that have space for more people. The expanded capacity would make the Metrorail system more reliable and efficient.
- **Region-wide impacts.** Enhancing capacity on the existing system would benefit the whole region. Currently, the 26 stations in the region’s core are the destination or transfer point for 80 percent of all rail riders system-wide. When those links are clogged, travel everywhere is affected.
- **Reduced road congestion.** These projects would not only affect transit riders. By making it easier to get on the train, we can reduce road congestion significantly and shorten many daily trips, whether on Metro or by car.
- **World-class system.** The economic benefits would be profound. Enhanced capacity on Metrorail would improve access to jobs and strengthen our competitive advantage in the global economy.



➔ PROVIDE MORE TELECOMMUTING AND OTHER OPTIONS FOR COMMUTING

What is it?

- **Reducing solo car trips.** This initiative would expand programs to increase the number of people who telework, find carpools, or use transit. These programs can be implemented by employers, government programs, or both.
- **More workers teleworking.** As a result of employer-based incentives, one in five workers in the region would telework each day. That's double the amount today. In addition, workplaces would let employees come to work early or late some days to avoid traveling during rush hour.
- **Subsidies for not driving.** The number of employees receiving transit and carpool subsidies from work would increase significantly. And workers who currently receive free parking could receive the cash value of that benefit to pay for transit or other commuting options (known as parking cash-out.)
- **Reduced parking incentives at work.** Local governments and employers would stop subsidizing the cost of parking in the region's "Activity Centers," where jobs and housing are concentrated. This would encourage more people to carpool or take transit. The new parking prices would vary based on distance from central business districts. Areas that currently do not charge for parking would charge lower amounts than those that already charge.

"Visualize" the future:

- **Getting cars off the road.** Imagine a future with fewer cars clogging the roads and polluting the air. This initiative would take many cars off roads due to the number of people telecommuting and using alternate modes on any given day. Without needing to build any new roads or other infrastructure, this initiative greatly lessens congestion due to the vast reduction in people traveling alone in cars at any given time.
- **Reduced emissions.** Vehicle emissions would consequently decrease, greatly benefiting the region's air quality and environment.





➔ EXPAND EXPRESS HIGHWAY NETWORK

What is it?

- **Congestion-free toll roads.** Toll lanes would be added to existing highways throughout the region. Traffic on these lanes would be congestion-free because of dynamic pricing – toll rates increase during the most congested times of day. And higher tolls would reduce demand on the lanes, keeping traffic free-flowing.
- **Building on an emerging toll road network.** Managed lanes exist today on new facilities in Maryland and Virginia. We are already seeing that toll lanes are the most likely way that we will be able to fund needed road projects in our growing region, even as we seek to reduce our dependence on driving alone. They would also encourage carpooling by exempting cars with more passengers from the tolls.
- **New opportunities for transit.** A new network of express buses would travel in the express toll lanes, connecting people and jobs throughout the region. The revenues generated from the tolls would be used to operate the new extensive regional network of high-quality bus services.

“Visualize” the future:

- **Less congestion, faster trips.** The expanded express lane system would reduce average travel times and congestion. Driving would be more reliable and predictable.
- **Speedy bus service.** Operating in free-flowing traffic would ensure reliable bus service. For people who cannot regularly afford to drive in toll lanes, express buses would provide an attractive and dependable way to take advantage of the congestion-free express lanes.
- **Expanded access to jobs.** Express lanes would expand economic opportunity, making it easier for commuters to know with certainty that they can get to work on time on a regular basis.

➔ IMPROVE WALK AND BIKE ACCESS TO TRANSIT

What is it?

- **More paths to transit.** Our region doesn't have enough safe options for walking or bicycling to transit stations. Often, there are barriers in the way, such as a lack of safe sidewalks or crosswalks, or a major road that cannot be crossed. If you live or work within a half mile of a rail or BRT station, you should be able to walk to the station within 10 minutes on average, or bike to the station within a short period.
- **Removing barriers for walkers and bicyclists.** Sidewalks would be built or repaired, crosswalks and crossing signals would be installed, and new trails would be constructed. Walking or biking would be comfortable and convenient.

“Visualize” the future:

- **Safe and comfortable.** Imagine having easy and safe access to transit, free of worry from unsafe sidewalks, poor lighting, or lack of safe crossings. Throughout the region, many more people would have safe and easy access to high-capacity transit – not only would this mean that people's personal safety while walking or biking to transit stations would improve – but it would also mean more people would choose to use transit because it would become a much more attractive option to them.
- **Providing key links.** First- and last-mile connections would provide access to jobs and other destinations within shorter commute times. Such cost-effective measures can improve Metro ridership and stimulate the economy. More people taking transit would take more cars off the roads, improving the environment and helping to reduce congestion for those who drive.
- **Easily move around your community.** Diverse economic activities would thrive if people can easily move around their communities. Seniors, people with disabilities, and transit-dependent populations would have more opportunities to get around without a car. Communities would benefit from increased street life and renewed vibrancy.



➔ COMPLETE THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TRAIL

What is it?

- **A bicycle beltway.** The National Capital Trail, a network of bicycle/pedestrian trails, would circle the region's central jurisdictions. It has often been referred to as the “bicycle beltway.” The trail would be 60 miles long when complete. Currently, 21 miles are unconstructed and three miles need to be upgraded.

Visualize” the future:

- **Access to opportunities.** When complete, the trail would connect 26 Metrorail stations and 36 of the region's “Activity Centers,” where jobs and housing are concentrated. This means many thousands of the region's residents would have access to high-quality trails for recreational use and vital connections for commuting and making other daily trips via the trail or by connecting to transit.
- **A regional network.** The trail would be a regional crossroads, where visitors would mingle with local residents, and connections to communities would be easily navigable.

You can help us make these ideas a reality!

Participate: Attend meetings in your community and be a part of the process.

Support: Show your support for projects, policies, and programs you want to see in your community that align with the Aspirational Initiatives.

Connect: Subscribe to Visualize 2045 updates, follow the TPB on Twitter and Facebook, and stay in the know at Visualize2045.org.

Learn: Check out Visualize2045.org. There you can learn about our long-range transportation plan. See what our region expects to fund in the future and get to know the aspirational element and these initiatives.

Staff contact:

Stacy Cook scook@mwkog.org



ABOUT THE TPB

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for metropolitan Washington. It is responsible for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in the metropolitan area. Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, 23 local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and nonvoting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).