



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Steering Committee Actions and Report of the Director
DATE: February 11, 2021

The attached materials include:

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



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
SUBJECT: Steering Committee Actions
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
DATE: February 11, 2021

At its meeting on February 5, the TPB Steering Committee reviewed and approved resolution SR11-2021, which authorized the transfer of \$274,250 from a surplus of Virginia, FY 2021 federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program funds to the W&OD Trail Master Plan project, which had previously been approved for funding by the TPB.

The Steering Committee also approved the transmission of a joint comment letter from the TPB and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its existing policy from 1986 concerning after-market catalytic converters. Comments are due on February 12, 2021, so the Steering Committee was asked to approve the letter ahead of this month's meeting. The final letter, also approved and signed by MWAQC dated February 10, 2020, is included in the letters sent and received portion of Item 5.

The TPB Bylaws provide that the Steering Committee "shall have the full authority to approve non-regionally significant items, and in such cases, it shall advise the TPB of its action."

Attachments

- Approved resolution SR11-2021 to approve the transfer of funds from the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program for a project in Virginia

TPB Steering Committee Attendance – February 5, 2021
(only voting members listed)

TPB Chair/ DC rep.: Charles Allen
TPB Vice Chair/VA rep.: Pamela Sebesky
TPB 2nd Vice Chair/MD rep.: Reuben Collins
DDOT: Mark Rawlings
MDOT: Kari Snyder
VDOT: Norman Whitaker
Technical Committee chair: Jason Groth
Previous TPB Chair: Kelly Russell

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002**

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS
FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET ASIDE PROGRAM
BETWEEN PROJECTS IN VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing American's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, the FAST Act's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set Aside) Program, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provides a portion of funding based on the relative share of the total State population sub-allocated to large urbanized areas, and the MPO is required "to develop a competitive process to allow eligible entities to submit projects for funding ... in consultation with the relevant State"; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set Aside Program provides funding for transportation programs and projects defined as eligible per Section 1109 of the FAST Act; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) are responsible for determining the total federal funding amount allocated to the TPB, determining project eligibility, project implementation, and project oversight; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set Aside Program provides an opportunity to fund projects that implement regional policies reflected in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan and in the seven initiatives endorsed by the TPB in December 2017 and January 2018, which include promoting Regional Activity Centers, improving pedestrian and bicycle access to transit, and completing the National Capital Trail; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set Aside is a complementary component of the TPB's Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, which supports planning-related projects and events of TPB member jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2018, the TPB approved Resolution R20-2018, which awarded federal funding for a package of TA Set-Aside projects in Virginia, including \$274,250 in federal TA Set Aside funding to the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority for the W&OD Mode Separation project; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority has requested that the W&OD Mode Separation project be cancelled with the intention of using other funds to complete it; and

WHEREAS, the cancellation of this project will create a surplus of \$274,250 in the TPB's federal TA Set-Aside sub-allocation for Virginia; and

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2017, the TPB approved Resolution R21-2017, which awarded funding for a package of TA Set Aside projects, including \$248,800 to the City of Falls Church for a project titled "W&OD Trail Master Plan" (later renamed "W&OD Trail Crossings Improvements" UPC 111402), which provided funding to improve crosswalks on the W&OD Trail in Falls Church; and

WHEREAS, VDOT has determined the W&OD Trail Master Plan project approved as part of R21-2017 is in need of additional federal funding in order to advertise for construction; and

WHEREAS, VDOT has requested that \$274,250 be transferred from the TPB's TA Set-Aside surplus to the W&OD Trail Master Plan project; and

WHEREAS, on July 12, 2019, the TPB approved Resolution SR1-2020 which established a policy for off-cycle fund transfers of TA Set-Aside funding between previously approved TPB projects, and the transfer requested by VDOT is consistent with that policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board approves the transfer of \$274,250 in federal TA Set Aside funds as described in the attached material.

Approved by the TPB Steering Committee at its virtual meeting on February 5, 2021.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner

1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 786-2701
Fax: (804) 786-2940

January 29, 2021

The Honorable Charles Allen, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: Request to Cancel a Transportation Alternatives (TA) project and process a transfer of TA funds

Dear Chairman Allen:

The NoVA Parks Authority has a TA set aside project (UPC 113612 - W&OD Trail – Mode Separation) and requested VDOT to cancel this project. The project is still going to be completed but using NVTA funds in connection with another project already being done by NoVA Parks. The Falls Church project delivery is interconnected with the overall W&OD trail improvements being accomplished by NoVA Parks.

There is \$274,250 of federal TA set aside funding available that has been requested by the City of Falls Church and NoVA Parks to transfer as follows:

:

- Request to transfer from UPC 113612 (W&OD Trail – Mode Separation) **\$274,250** of TA Set Aside funds to the City of Falls Church project UPC 111402 (W&OD Trail Crossing Improvements) to cover an increase in cost.

All funding transfer requests above have been coordinated with the Local Assistance TA Program Coordinator. VDOT requests approval of this transfer at the next Steering Committee meeting. VDOT's representative will be available to answer questions. Thank you for our assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Cuervo".

Helen Cuervo, P.E.
District Administrator

Cc: John Swanson - Carol Bondurant - Maria Sinner, P.E. - Norman Whitaker, AICP



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Letters Sent/Received
DATE: February 11, 2021

The attached letters were sent/received since the last TPB meeting.

February 10, 2021

Acting Administrator Jane Nishida
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Subject: Comment on U.S. EPA's 1986 Policy for After-Market Catalytic Converters

Dear Administrator Nishida:

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the *EPA Tampering Policy: The EPA Enforcement Policy on Vehicle and Engine Tampering and Aftermarket Defeat Devices under the Clean Air Act*, published in the December 14, 2020 Federal Register.

The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) is certified by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia to develop plans demonstrating attainment of federal ozone and other criteria pollutant standards for the Washington, DC-MD-VA non-attainment area. We have done so successfully for more than twenty-five years through a partnership among the state and local governments in metropolitan Washington.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the National Capital Region, jointly established by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia and so designated by the federal government. As an MPO, the TPB is mandated to conform with and integrate regional air quality plans in its transportation plans.

The Metropolitan Washington Region has been designated as a Marginal non-attainment area for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Despite local and regional actions that have helped meet the previous ozone standards, the region could not meet the 2015 ozone NAAQS by the required deadline. Consequently, the region places a high priority on actions that help reduce precursors of ground-level ozone, particularly actions that enforce existing requirements.

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) are a precursor pollutant of ground-level ozone. In addition, NO_x is a precursor to secondary particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) formation. Exposure to PM_{2.5}, along with ground-level ozone, is associated with premature death, increased hospitalizations, and emergency room visits due to exacerbation of chronic heart and lung diseases and other serious health impacts. Some communities in the Metropolitan Washington Region face higher rates than the national average of illnesses like asthma, which are aggravated by these pollutants. As such, reductions in NO_x emissions will not only assist in meeting federal clean air standards, but they will also provide health benefits from both reduced ozone and PM_{2.5} pollution.

For these reasons, MWAQC and TPB support EPA's efforts to review and evaluate its policy published in 1986 concerning after-market catalytic converters (AMCC) in light of significant technical advancements made related to AMCCs and emission standards implemented since then.

MWAQC and TPB specifically support the following provisions to be part of an update of the 1986 Catalyst Policy:

- Establish a consistent, robust, nationwide enforcement policy for all types of replacement after-treatment systems for vehicles and engines.

After-treatment systems that treat exhaust from the engine, including gasoline and diesel products for the on-road and nonroad sectors, vary in their applications and technologies. As such, a consistent and stringent enforcement policy supporting section 203(a)(3) of the Clean Air Act, which prohibits the tampering with or removal of federally required emissions control devices, is necessary.

- Develop more stringent emission performance and durability requirements for new after-market converters to reflect the significant advances that have been made for catalytic converters since EPA first published its after-market policy in 1986. These advances have also made the improved technology readily available and affordable for after-market converters.
- Establish a clear certification process for Federal Aftermarket Converters compliant with the updated policy.
- Address the compatibility of after-market converters with the vehicle's Onboard Diagnostics (OBD) system for Model Year 1996 and newer vehicles.
- Eliminate the provisions permitting the sale of used converters for pre-ODB II vehicles (Model Year 1995 and older vehicles) and requesting EPA to study the appropriateness of allowing the reuse of OBD II era (Model Year 1996 and newer vehicles) catalytic converters.
- Implement the updated Catalyst Policy as expeditiously as possible.
- Continue to assist states in their introduction and implementation of Inspection/Maintenance programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Robert Day
Chair, Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC)



The Honorable Charles Allen
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Announcements and Updates
DATE: February 11, 2021

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



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: John Swanson, TPB Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: FY 2022 Solicitation for TLC Applications
DATE: February 11, 2021

March 8 is the deadline for FY 2022 applications for the Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program. The application period opened on January 8.

Any local jurisdiction in the National Capital Region that is a member of the TPB is eligible to apply for technical assistance through TLC. Non-profits and non-member jurisdictions in the region may apply as secondary recipients to a TPB member jurisdiction. Recipients receive short-term consultant services and no direct financial assistance. Projects are eligible to receive between \$30,000 and \$60,000 in technical assistance for planning projects and up to \$80,000 for design projects. TLC projects typically last 6-8 months.

As in past years, TLC projects may provide a range of services, such as:

- Small area and transit station area planning
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety and access studies
- Transit-oriented development studies
- Housing studies
- Economic development studies
- Design guidelines and roadway standards
- Streetscape improvement plans
- Safe Routes to School planning
- Trail planning and design
- Transit demand and feasibility analysis

The TPB encourages applications that address TPB priorities, including support for multimodal transportation options, land use enhancements in Activity Centers and near high-capacity transit, and access for low-income and minority communities. This year, we are particularly interested in applications that support walking and biking improvements in Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs) as well as projects to plan and design missing links in the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN). The TPB approved the TAFAs and NCTN in July.

The TPB is scheduled to approve a slate of recommended projects in April. The projects will begin this fall.

For more information, contact John Swanson (jswanson@mwkog.org) or Nick Suarez (nsuarez@mwkog.org).



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Jon Schermann, TPB Systems Performance Analysis Manager
SUBJECT: Regional Safety Program: Update
DATE: February 11, 2021

The application period for the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Regional Safety Program (Program) is now open. Member jurisdictions or agencies have until March 22, 2021 to submit their applications. The Regional Safety Program was formally established by the TPB as part of Resolution R3-2021 adopted on July 22, 2020. Please note that this memo provides the same information about the structure and timeline of the Program as was provided in the January Director's Report.

DESCRIPTION

The Regional Safety Program provides short-term consultant services to individual member jurisdictions to assist with planning or preliminary engineering projects that address roadway safety issues. Examples include studies, planning, or design projects that will improve roadway safety and lead to a reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes on the region's roadways. The program provides consultant assistance of up to \$60,000 for studies or planning projects, and up to \$80,000 for design or preliminary engineering projects.

FUNDING

The Regional Safety Program is funded at \$250,000 for fiscal year 2021. It is anticipated that similar levels of funding will be provided in future fiscal years.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Any TPB member jurisdiction or agency that is a member of the Transportation Planning Board is eligible to apply. Projects are eligible to receive up to \$60,000 in assistance for studies or planning projects and up to \$80,000 for design or preliminary engineering projects. Recipients will receive short-term consultant services. They will not receive direct financial assistance.

The FY 2021 application period is now open. Member jurisdictions or agencies have until March 22, 2021 to submit their applications.

A panel of consisting of safety experts will review the application submissions and recommend projects to the TPB for funding. The panel's recommendations will represent a cross-section of jurisdictions throughout the region. The TPB is anticipated to approve the applications in May or June of 2021.

Selection Panel Composition

The selection panel will consist of one TPB staff member, one Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) safety representative, and a safety representative from each member state.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The TPB encourages applications that address one or more of these regional safety priorities at the community level:

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS FOR LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The TPB has identified Equity Emphasis Areas with concentrations of low-income and minority populations. The Regional Safety Program encourages applications focused on reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries in these areas.

IMPROVING ROAD USER BEHAVIOR

The Regional Safety Program seeks projects that increase seat belt use among motor vehicle occupants, reduce unsafe vehicle speeds, reduce impaired and distracted driving, and otherwise improve road user behavior.

IDENTIFYING AND DESIGNING SAFETY COUNTERMEASURES

The Regional Safety Program seeks projects that and design applicable countermeasures especially those outlined in TPB Resolution R3-2021, as appropriate and on a case by case basis.

UNDERSTANDING SAFETY DATA

The Regional Safety Program seeks projects to analyze crash data to better understand jurisdictional- or community-level roadway safety issues and identify behavioral and/or infrastructure countermeasures to address them.

CROSS JURISDICTIONAL SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The Regional Safety Program encourages cross jurisdictional and multi-agency cooperation to improve roadway safety.

STUDIES AND PLANNING PROJECTS (UP TO \$60,000 IN FUNDING)

The TPB encourages planning projects that lead to reductions in fatal and serious injury crashes, improved jurisdictional safety planning capacity, and support the goals outlined in the regional safety resolution R3-2021. Projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Support for local roadway safety plans
- Road Safety Audits
- Crash data analysis
- Jurisdictional efforts to leverage the “Street Smart” program
- Identification of jurisdictional “high injury networks”

DESIGN (UP TO \$80,000 IN FUNDING)

Design projects can cover any of the planning project categories and should have undergone a local planning process. Projects should be ready for focused design or preliminary engineering work. Regional Safety Program funds can help projects reach up to 30 percent design completion or make progress toward that phase of project development. Project categories may include (but are not limited to):

- Road diet design
- Lighting and signage improvements
- Intersection improvements
- Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure

CONTRACTING

To minimize the time required to get consultants under contract, TPB staff, with the COG contracts office, will develop master contracts with select consultant firms. The intent is to prequalify a set of consultant firms to do the work coming out of the Program. Once projects are approved by the TPB the preapproved consultants would submit proposals. The selected firm, who would already be under a master contract, would be authorized to execute the project as a task order.

FIRST YEAR (PILOT) TIMELINE

- Solicit applications: January 19, 2021 through March 22, 2021
- Optional abstracts due: February 12, 2021
- Selection panel recommendations: April-May 2021
- TPB approves projects: May or June 2021
- Consultant selection: June-July 2021
- Contract award: June-July 2021

DRAFT FUTURE YEAR (REGULAR PROGRAM) TIMELINE

- Solicit applications: April through May
- Selection panel recommendations: June-July
- TPB approves projects: July or September
- Consultant selection: August-October
- Contract award: Fall



MEMORANDUM

TO: National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lynn Winchell-Mendy, Transportation Planner IV
SUBJECT: Impact of COVID-19 on Subrecipients of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (and a few active JARC and New Freedom projects)
DATE: February 11, 2021

This document addresses the impacts of COVID-19 on active projects funded under the Enhanced Mobility JARC, and New Freedom programs in the DC-MD-VA urbanized area. Staff has been tracking the impact through interactions with subrecipients and information from quarterly reports covering the period April 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) acting as administrative agent, is the designated recipient for the FTA's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program for the Washington, DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. Enhanced Mobility provides funding for transportation for people with disabilities and older adults who have difficulty using public transportation. The program provides approximately \$3 million annually in matching grant funds for non-profit organizations, local governments, transit agencies, and private for-profit providers.

Previously, COG managed the now discontinued FTA Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs. The handful of remaining projects actively working to spend down the funds are included.

To better understand the impact, it is important to know the types of projects funded:

- Mobility Management
 - Transportation options information
 - Mobility counseling
 - Travel Training
 - Operating/supporting the operation of volunteer driver programs
- Vehicles
 - Wheelchair accessible taxicabs
 - Minivans for group homes
 - Buses to transportation people with developmental disabilities to employment training, adult day programming, recreational activities, shopping, etc.
- Operating
 - Voucher programs – subsidized fare

BROAD IMPACTS

When the pandemic first hit, subrecipients and the individuals they serve saw:

- travel restrictions for populations at high risk
- a decline in drivers willing to drive taxis/ride-hailing and people willing to ride
- a decline in number of volunteers, who are often older adults
- Shut down of adult day and vocational programs
- Significant decreases in ridership
- An end to in-person activities

Though some activities and services are starting up at limited capacity, programs continue to see a decline (from pre-COVID levels) in drivers, volunteers, and ridership. Most adult day programs remain closed, and vocational programming is limited. Restrictions for in-person activities continue and rides are provided by some agencies only for emergencies.

Specific examples of the impact include:

- The University of Maryland, College Park's paratransit program will operate at 20% capacity for the foreseeable future.
- Sunrise of Maryland, Inc. had to permanently close its adult day program in Lanham, Maryland due to lack of demand as families opted to keep participants at home due to safety concerns.
- A decline in ridership for Diamond Transportation's RouteSource program, which provides transportation to individuals with disabilities to employment, from a high of 1,128 rides in January to a low of 3 rides in May. Recent ridership increased slightly to 341 rides in December, but it is still not enough to sustain the program which is looking at laying off staff.
- Currently, accessible taxi provider Yellow Transportation is seeing a 30% decrease in accessible rides.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Enhanced Mobility subrecipients have been responding to the challenge in innovative ways. They have:

- Developed virtual travel training and volunteer training platforms
- Developed outreach materials, translating marketing materials into Spanish
- Planned for next steps in Workplans, for reopening
- Held virtual meetings with partners
- Purchased PPE for volunteer drivers as part of supply budget line item
- Adjusted use of vehicles to meet emerging needs
 - Delivering Meals on Wheels, prescriptions, groceries and COVID care kits
 - Providing rides for critical medical needs only
- Safely provided emergency rides

While all the work of the subrecipients during such a challenging time are recognized, some specific examples include:

- The Arc of Prince George's County is partnering with the Department of Aging and Family Services to distribute over 350 boxes of food per week to seniors and people with disabilities living throughout Prince George's County and with the Department of Health to deliver COVID care kits and food bags to 160 people a week.
- Capitol Hill Village shifted its focus to providing educational materials on alternative transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities at the height of the pandemic, and is now actively addressing the need for transportation to vaccination sites.
- The Arc of Northern Virginia transitioned its train the travel trainer program to an online TECH Camp that allowed family involvement and included an evening "campfire" session with participants and volunteer peer counselors.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor the impact through quarterly reporting and ongoing interactions with subrecipients and will share the information as applicable.

Staff will consider any need for no-cost extensions, budget modifications or budget revisions (in consultation with FTA) for projects as they continue to work through the pandemic.

Staff will continue to bring awareness to how programs supporting older adults and people with disabilities are being affected by the pandemic:

- Staff presented on the COVID-19 impacts to subrecipients at the TPB Technical Committee's February 5 meeting.
- Two programs providing direct transportation service discussed the impact of COVID-19 on their programs at the February 12 Access for All Advisory Committee meeting.

On December 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) was signed into law by President Trump. CRRSAA includes \$14 billion in supplemental appropriations allocated to support the transit industry during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Specifically, \$50 million of the \$14 billion will be distributed to the 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program through formula grants.

The apportionment for the Washington, DC/VA/MD urbanized area is \$591,353 Federal and will be made available through an application in TrAMS to the Designated Recipient, TPB with COG as administrative agent, for 5310 Enhanced Mobility funds. The purpose of the funding is to support expenses eligible under Enhanced Mobility, but the recipients are directed to prioritize payroll and operational needs. Funding allocated to grantees/subrecipients is a local decision. Agenda item #11 at the February 17th TPB meeting proposes a process for management of the funds in the DC-MD-VA urbanized area.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Michael Farrell, TPB Senior Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: FY 2020 Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Annual Report
DATE: February 11, 2021

This memorandum announces the release of the FY 2020 Annual Report for the regional Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety program and gives a brief summary of FY 2020 (October 2019 to September 2020) program activities.

BACKGROUND

The Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety program uses mass media, advertising, direct outreach, and law enforcement to educate motorists and pedestrians on safer behavior and reduce deaths and injuries. Established in 2002, Street Smart is sponsored by WMATA, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, is managed at COG, and is supported by many partners committed to pedestrian and bicycle safety in the Washington region.

FY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The federal FY 2020 Annual Report and a summary video have been posted at <http://www.beststreetsmart.net/about/>. Annual reports from previous years, and a host of campaign materials, are also available at that site.

FY 2020 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Street Smart typically carries out two waves of paid media, public relations, and law enforcement, one in the fall, when pedestrian deaths typically peak, and a smaller but still important campaign in the spring. The fall 2019 campaign was conducted as planned, with new testimonial videos/television spots, a press event in the District of Columbia, and multiple virtual reality training events and enforcement events.

Plans for the Spring 2020 campaign had to be changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and precautions. The typical spring multimedia campaign was postponed to September 2020 (effectively “pre-loading” the October/November fall campaign). In the meantime during summer 2020, new pandemic-related ads—addressing increases in pedestrian/bicycling activity and distracted or speeding drivers—were created and promoted on social media.

Transit ad buys that had already been placed for May 2020 were able to be rescheduled to September. Additionally, in preparation for the upcoming FY 2021 campaign, additional voice-over testimonials, as well as a touchless, unstaffed “testimonial wall” for deployment at shopping centers or other suitable indoor locations, were developed. (The FY 2021 campaign began in October 2020.) Details are available in the Annual Report.

NEXT STEPS

Results of the Fall 2020 campaign, and of an evaluation survey carried out in December 2020, will be available at a later date.

February 8, 2021

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair
Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: UNFAVORABLE - HB485 - Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight

Dear Chairman Barve and Honorable Members of the Committee:

We write to express concern with the language of HB485 – Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight, specifically and exclusively with regard to the role the bill creates for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (“BMC”), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (“COG”) and metropolitan planning organizations (“MPOs”) as staff to the Public-Private Partnership Oversight Review Board (“Review Board”). This function is inappropriate for our organizations and presents a conflict of interest with our planning operations.

This letter does not reflect a position as to the efficacy of HB485 generally. **We simply request the Committee remove all references to BMC, COG and MPOs from the bill’s language.** See Page 3, Lines 12-14 and Page 10, Lines 22-25. If the Committee cannot amend the bill as requested, we must respectfully oppose passage and request an **unfavorable** report.

As the Committee is likely aware, BMC and COG are the regional councils of government serving greater Baltimore and greater Washington, respectively. BMC and COG host and provide staff support to the MPOs that coordinate federally mandated regional transportation planning for each geographic area. These MPOs are the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (“BRTB”) and National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (“TPB”), respectively.

Under federal law, MPOs exist to coordinate the long and short-range transportation planning processes between local departments of transportation and state department(s) of transportation, ensuring that federal transportation investment reflects a regional approach to transportation system development and maintenance. These boards are independent bodies charged with the responsibility to implement the federal continuous, cooperative and comprehensive metropolitan planning process. Neither BRTB nor TPB undertake individual project development activities on behalf of any their members, especially should such projects come before the full board for inclusion in the MPO plan and program. It is important for the objectivity and independence of the board that MPO staff do not also serve as staff to one or more of its member agencies.

As outlined in the bill, the role of the Review Board is rooted in the General Assembly’s function in legislative oversight of executive action. The employment of public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects is currently within the domain of the Governor and executive agencies. For BMC, COG or its MPOs to serve any one set of stakeholders over another would hinder their independence.

Additionally, the work activities undertaken by the staff of BMC, COG or their MPOs is reviewed and approved by their respective boards of directors. As such, these entities would be unable to accept any mandated work activity outside of the board process.

Furthermore, the bill is not clear about whether an organization and/or its MPO would review a public-private partnership within its respective federally-prescribed Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) or possibly even opine on a project outside that planning area. MPAs are the geographic area determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor, in which the metropolitan planning process is carried out. In either respect, the language of the bill presents multiple issues for the undersigned parties and MPOs.

First, if asked to review a project *within* our MPA, we would be presented with a conflict of interest, because each project has already been reviewed and approved in some capacity by the MPO (including voting members from state and local DOTs) in the planning process. Not only would this be redundant and unnecessarily duplicative, we simply could not serve as neutral third parties in the review of projects our MPOs have already approved.

Second, if asked to review a project *outside* our planning area (MPA), we would risk running afoul of federal law. MPOs are prohibited from planning outside of their MPA. At the very least, this legislation could violate the spirit of federal law, and would force one MPO to question the professional judgment of colleagues in a neighboring region.

Third, if a project were to traverse two planning regions (imagine a large-scale project along the I-95 corridor between Washington, DC and Baltimore), neither organization could serve as a neutral third party in the oversight function.

We find ourselves in the unenviable position of opposing legislation that passed the House of Delegates in 2020. However, the bill, as originally introduced last session, did not include BMC, COG or MPOs. The language at issue was added by amendment. **We simply ask the Committee to remove all references to BMC, COG and MPOs from the bill and that the obligation for staff support to the Review Board rest elsewhere.**

If the Committee does not see fit to remove this language, we respectfully oppose passage of this legislation and request an **unfavorable** report.

Thank you for your consideration of the concerns expressed herein. Please contact us anytime.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Kelly
Executive Director
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
mkelly@baltometro.org



Chuck Bean
Executive Director
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
cbean@mwkog.org

cc: Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, Sponsor
Delegate Tony Bridges, Member, Baltimore Metropolitan Council Board of Directors
Delegate Marc Korman, Member, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board



February 10, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: UNFAVORABLE – SB361 – Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Honorable Members of the Committee:

We write to express concern with the language of SB361 – Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight, specifically and exclusively with regard to the role the bill creates for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (“BMC”), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (“COG”) and metropolitan planning organizations (“MPOs”) as staff to the Public-Private Partnership Oversight Review Board (“Review Board”). This function is inappropriate for our organizations and presents a conflict of interest with our planning operations.

This letter does not reflect a position as to the efficacy of SB361 generally. **We simply request the Committee remove all references to BMC, COG and MPOs from the bill’s language.** See Page 3, Lines 12-14 and Page 10, Lines 22-25. If the Committee cannot amend the bill as requested, we must respectfully oppose passage and request an **unfavorable** report.

As the Committee is likely aware, BMC and COG are the regional councils of government serving greater Baltimore and greater Washington, respectively. BMC and COG host and provide staff support to the MPOs that coordinate federally mandated regional transportation planning for each geographic area. These MPOs are the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (“BRTB”) and National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (“TPB”), respectively.

Under federal law, MPOs exist to coordinate the long and short-range transportation planning processes between local departments of transportation and state department(s) of transportation, ensuring that federal transportation investment reflects a regional approach to transportation system development and maintenance. These boards are independent bodies charged with the responsibility to implement the federal continuous, cooperative and comprehensive metropolitan planning process. Neither BRTB nor TPB undertake individual project development activities on behalf of any their members, especially should such projects come before the full board for inclusion in the MPO plan and program. It is important for the objectivity and independence of the board that MPO staff do not also serve as staff to one or more of its member agencies.

As outlined in the bill, the role of the Review Board is rooted in the General Assembly’s function in legislative oversight of executive action. The employment of public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects is currently within the domain of the Governor and executive agencies. For BMC, COG or its MPOs to serve any one set of stakeholders over another would hinder their independence.

Additionally, the work activities undertaken by the staff of BMC, COG or their MPOs is reviewed and approved by their respective boards of directors. As such, these entities would be unable to accept any mandated work activity outside of the board process.

Furthermore, the bill is not clear about whether an organization and/or its MPO would review a public-private partnership within its respective federally-prescribed Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) or possibly even opine on a project outside that planning area. MPAs are the geographic area determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor, in which the metropolitan planning process is carried out. In either respect, the language of the bill presents multiple issues for the undersigned parties and MPOs.

First, if asked to review a project *within* our MPA, we would be presented with a conflict of interest, because each project has already been reviewed and approved in some capacity by the MPO (including voting members from state and local DOTs) in the planning process. Not only would this be redundant and unnecessarily duplicative, we simply could not serve as neutral third parties in the review of projects our MPOs have already approved.

Second, if asked to review a project *outside* our planning area (MPA), we would risk running afoul of federal law. MPOs are prohibited from planning outside of their MPA. At the very least, this legislation could violate the spirit of federal law, and would force one MPO to question the professional judgment of colleagues in a neighboring region.

Third, if a project were to traverse two planning regions (imagine a large-scale project along the I-95 corridor between Washington, DC and Baltimore), neither organization could serve as a neutral third party in the oversight function.

We find ourselves in the unenviable position of opposing legislation that passed the House of Delegates in 2020. However, the bill, as originally introduced last session, did not include BMC, COG or MPOs. The language at issue was added by amendment. **We simply ask the Committee to remove all references to BMC, COG and MPOs from the bill and that the obligation for staff support to the Review Board rest elsewhere.**

If the Committee does not see fit to remove this language, we respectfully oppose passage of this legislation and request an **unfavorable** report.

Thank you for your consideration of the concerns expressed herein. Please contact us anytime.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Kelly
Executive Director
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
mkelly@baltometro.org



Chuck Bean
Executive Director
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
cbean@mwkog.org

cc: Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Sponsor
President Bill Ferguson, Member, Baltimore Metropolitan Council Board of Directors

January 25, 2021

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 73 - State and Local Government and Private Employers – Teleworking

Dear Chair McIntosh:

As home to both the Washington region’s metropolitan planning organization, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as well as its Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, Commuter Connections, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) has a long history of supporting forward-looking transportation plans and mobility solutions, such as telework.

Through Commuter Connections and in partnership with the TPB, COG has contributed to a sustained growth in telework regionwide and sought to further expand its use. And COG believes the widespread adoption of telework due to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the prospects for further growth is very good, while acknowledging that not all jobs can be done remotely.

For your reference, COG would like to share the following information on telework for legislators as they consider efforts to expand telework.

Telework is a key strategy for dealing with future growth and traffic congestion. It also results in decreased emissions and cleaner air, reduced energy consumption, and improved quality of life for area workers. When the TPB adopted its long-range transportation plan in 2014, peak period congestion was forecast to grow by 60 to 70 percent despite a planned investment of about \$40 billion over a 25-year period. Recognizing the urgent need to shape better outcomes, the board examined initiatives that would significantly improve the transportation system’s performance. It found that increasing telework and other TDM initiatives to reduce solo driving offered the most positive trends, so the TPB adopted this strategy as one of its seven aspirational initiatives in its *Visualize 2045* long-range plan.

Pre-pandemic, many area employees were teleworking, but telework was growing at a slow rate. For the past several decades, Commuter Connections—which is funded by MDOT as well as VDOT and DDOT—has promoted telework, offered employers assistance in establishing programs, and tracked its steady growth in metropolitan Washington. According to its most recent *State of the Commute Survey* in 2019, 35 percent of commuters reported working remotely or from home at least occasionally, which is up from 19 percent in 2007. These teleworkers represented almost 1.1 million people.

During the pandemic, many area employers turned to telework at unprecedented levels to ensure the safety of their employees and the continuity of their business operations. Officials

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
January 25, 2021

are now reviewing the impacts of increased teleworking during COVID-19 and considering how to maximize its use once the health crisis is over. In May and June, Commuter Connections surveyed area employers who participate in its employer outreach program about teleworking at their organizations, including questions about the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on telework. Nearly all (97 percent) of the 180 employers that participated in the survey said at least some employees were teleworking since the start of the pandemic. More than half (55 percent) said all employees teleworked all of their workdays. The average share of employees who teleworked grew to 82 percent at sites with telework already in place. Fifty-seven percent of work sites expected to see a long-term increase in teleworking, even when the pandemic is over.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you. If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact COG's Deputy Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning Kanti Srikanth at 202-962-3257 or ksrikanth@mwkog.org.

Sincerely,



Chuck Bean
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Carol L. Krimm

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: H.R. Metro Accountability and Investment Act of 2021
S. Metro Safety, Accountability and Investment Act of 2021

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to **strongly urge the federal government to reauthorize and increase its existing funding commitment to Metro in an amount of at least \$2 billion over 10 years**. As the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington, dedicated funding for Metro is a top priority and we commend the region's congressional delegation for jointly sponsoring this essential legislation.

In 2018, our local and state governments, with the strong support of COG and a coalition of business and civic organizations, worked together to pass unprecedented legislation in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia providing additional dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Collectively, the region is committing an additional \$500 million a year to fund essential capital improvements to the Metro system.

As a valued partner in our Metro system, the federal government needs to continue to provide dedicated funding critical to the safety and reliability of the system. As the current commitment under PRIIA is set to expire, COG strongly urges the federal government to extend and increase existing funding commitments for Metro as proposed by the region's congressional delegation. Metro is critical to the federal government. It has transported over half the federal workforce, with more than 30 percent of Metrorail stations serving federal facilities and serves a key role in evacuating the region during emergencies. Federal funding – together with the region's commitment – will support the major maintenance and capital rehabilitation activities that are necessary to restore and improve the aging transit system.

Your collaboration is essential to securing the additional funding our region needs to keep Metro safe and our economy thriving. We appreciate your support on this initiative.

Sincerely,



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



Christian Dorsey
Vice Chair, Board of Directors
Arlington County



Kate Stewart
Vice Chair, Board of Directors
City of Takoma Park

Cc: Metropolitan Washington Regional Congressional Delegation



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Gregory Slater
Secretary
Kevin B. Quinn, Jr.
Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION & MDOT MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
ANNOUNCE OPENING OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON
SCMAGLEV PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

FRA has Agreed to Extend the Public Comment Period from 45 to 90 days

BALTIMORE, MD (JANUARY 15, 2021) – Continuing their efforts to keep the public informed about the progress of the environmental review of the private-sector Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev (SCMAGLEV) Project, the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) (FRA) and [Maryland Department of Transportation \(MDOT\) Maryland Transit Administration](#) (MDOT MTA) today announced the public comment period will open on Friday, January 22, on the SCMAGLEV Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS was posted online today at [bwmaglev.info](#) for public review. All comments received beginning today will be included in the formal public record. Responding to requests from stakeholders, FRA has agreed to extend the original planned public comment period from 45 to 90 days.

The Baltimore-Washington SCMAGLEV is a private-sector project being proposed by Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR). FRA and MDOT MTA prepared a DEIS to study the potential environmental impacts of a new high-speed rail system. BWRR's proposed SCMAGLEV system would operate between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore with a stop at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

On behalf of BWRR, MDOT's responsibilities, in partnership with FRA, include: administering the federal grant funding to perform preliminary engineering and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study, preparing NEPA documentation and managing the DEIS public outreach process.

FRA and MDOT MTA plan to host virtual public hearings (dates to be determined). These public hearings will be held no sooner than March 22. For updates on the virtual hearing dates and times, please visit [bwmaglev.info](#) and sign up to join the project mailing list. Due to the current COVID-19 protocols, the public hearings will be held virtually. The virtual public hearings will provide an opportunity for the public to verbally comment on the SCMAGLEV DEIS.

The 90-day comment period is open until April 22. In addition to providing comments at the virtual public hearings, the public can submit comments on the website at [bwmaglev.info](#), by email at info@bwmaglev.info or by mail to SCMAGLEV Project, c/o Lauren Molesworth, Maryland Transit Administration, 6 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

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Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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For immediate release: January 27, 2021

Metro, AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon announce wireless service in rail tunnels systemwide

Transit riders and visitors to the nation's capital now enjoy one of the most connected wireless experiences of any rail system in the U.S. with coverage available in all tunnels. The nation's major wireless carriers—AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon—and Metro today officially announced the final milestone, more than a decade in the making, to provide wireless service for those who use the Metrorail system. With Metro's 100-mile tunnel network now connected to each wireless carrier's network, customers can communicate or stream content throughout their journey from the street to the station and in the train.

The latest activation brings the final three segments online between Dupont Circle in Downtown DC and White Flint in Maryland, the Yellow Line from L'Enfant Plaza to the Pentagon, and Silver Line in Tysons Corner.

Metro and the wireless carriers worked closely with the region's Congressional delegation on the project, including U.S. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA).

"This is something we've been working with Metro and the carriers on for years, because it will improve safety for Metro riders and workers," said Senator Warner, "The federal government and the region have made substantial investments in making this system safer and more reliable, from rebuilding tracks to introducing new rail cars, and now passengers will be able to use their cellphones underground throughout the system."

Completion of the underground portion of the Metrorail system adds to the customer experience that already included wireless service in all below ground stations and free Wi-Fi at all 91 stations.

"Bringing this project to the finish line gives riders added security and all the conveniences of wireless connectivity. Customers can text, talk, and explore the internet and apps, including Metro's mobile payment options to load value and manage their SmarTrip account while traveling on Metro," said Metro General Manager/CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld. "We appreciate the work of the carrier team, the leadership of our Congressional delegation, and the support of state and local partners throughout this project. A robust wireless network will enable new technologies to improve real-time customer communications and operate more efficiently."

The latest coverage additions will add to safety and security by improving mobile communication for customers, Metro employees and first responders in the event of an emergency.

The installation required more than 400 miles of cabling and infrastructure in Metro's extensive tunnel system and additional components in shafts, stations, and above-ground connections. Much of the work could only occur when train service was not operating during three-to-four-hour overnight maintenance windows or during other scheduled track maintenance outages.

"This significant joint investment provides a communications network that allows each provider's customers to stay connected with their friends, families and favorite content when using the Metro system. The cooperative approach adopted by the Providers and WMATA was critical in bringing this project to fruition," said AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon in a joint statement.

The project, initiated by the Congressional Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, was jointly funded by an agreement between Metro and the wireless carriers and addresses recommendations by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on Metro's Underground Communications Systems.

Day-to-day operation and maintenance of the carrier's communications system will be performed by the wireless carriers who will also regularly test and enhance the network to provide an optimal wireless experience for their respective customers.

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