

**ITEM 10 – Information
December 20, 2023**

Visualize 2050 Status Reports

- A. Public Engagement Summary
- B. Maryland Express Lanes Projects
- C. WMATA Projects And Operations

Background: The board will receive a briefing summarizing the outcomes of the February 15-November 30, 2023 public engagement conducted in preparation for Visualize 2050. In addition, the Visualize 2050 schedule was changed due to uncertainties with a few of the major projects in our region – the express lanes system in Maryland and the WMATA transit system. As the deadline approaches for the Visualize 2050 project inputs, MDOT and WMATA will provide briefings on the status of these inputs.

ATTACHMENTS

- Item 10A – Visualize 2050 Status Memo
- Item 10A – Visualize 2050 Initial Project List Public Comment Analysis Summary
- Item 10B – MDOT Presentation
- Item 10C – WMATA Visualize 2050 Update Status Letter



December 13, 2023

Hon. Reuben Collins, Chair
Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

Dear Chair Collins and Board members:

This letter responds to the Transportation Planning Board's request for a status update on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro)'s submission for the update of the Visualize 2050 long-range transportation plan. Metro's ability to develop a 25-year capital investment plan tied to "reasonably-expected" financial resources is complicated by our systemic lack of dedicated, reliable funding and the funding gap it creates for current and future budgets. Metro's proposed FY2025 budget, released on December 12th, includes drastic service reductions and significant fare increases. It emphasizes the very stark realities that Metro and the region face in light of our structural funding gap for operations, maintenance, and state of good repair. This poses significant risks not only to Metro, but to the region's social, environmental, and economic future. Despite these limitations, Metro remains on-track to meet upcoming process deadlines for the Visualize 2050 update.

Submittals for "Regionally-Significant Impacts" on Air Quality Projects

The update schedule set a deadline of December 29, 2023 for jurisdictions and agencies to submit projects that will have "regionally-significant impacts" on air quality. Transit has a large, positive impact on regional air quality, but in this case the definition applies to new capital projects that will change air quality, rather than existing systems and services. For transit, this generally means projects that expand capacity or change the geographic extent of the system. Though Metro has several planning efforts underway that are highlighted below, at this time, Metro and the region have not funded any expansion projects that meet the criteria of being regionally significant for air quality and therefore, Metro does not plan to submit expansion projects for this update of Visualize 2050. As these or other projects progress, we may submit them as part of future updates of Visualize 2050 if they meet the criteria of being regionally significant for air quality:

Ongoing System Planning Work

Better Bus Network Redesign: In 2022, Metro launched the Better Bus Network

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Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority**

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Redesign to develop and deliver a new bus network that is fast, frequent, reliable, and connects customers where they want to go, when they want to travel. The project has applied a data-driven analysis, partnered extensively with local operators within Metro's Compact area, and conducted robust public and stakeholder engagement to build a network that puts customers first. In the last phase of outreach Metro interacted with over 20,000 participants through pop-ups, ride-along events, and workshops. The project team also met with over 110 elected officials and 80 representatives from jurisdictional partners, community organizations, and advocacy groups. The project will conclude with recommendations for a Year One network and a longer-term Visionary Network.

Blue/Orange/Silver Corridor Capacity & Reliability Study (BOS Study): In 2019 Metro launched an alternatives analysis to analyze and explain the capacity and reliability challenges that have faced Metro customers on those three lines for 20 years, and to develop and assess potential strategies and projects to address those needs. The study has included extensive public and stakeholder outreach, including TPB staff, jurisdictional agency staff and executive leadership, business and community organizations, and elected officials. In keeping with the federal project development process, the study is seeking to determine a locally preferred alternative for future study, development, and environmental review.

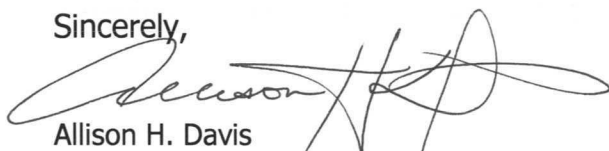
Next-Generation Train Control / Communications-Based Train Control Assessment: Metro's train control and signaling systems have not been significantly upgraded or modernized since Metrorail was first built, and system components are becoming more difficult to source for maintenance and replacement. Over the past decade, there have been promising advancements in train signaling and control technology, and Metro continues to explore and analyze those options. Any modernized train control system would improve service reliability and resilience, and some (such as Communications-Based Train Control, or CBTC) will expand capacity as well.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis Inputs

The Visualize 2050 update requires jurisdictions and agencies to submit transit service plans and fare structures as technical inputs for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Those inputs will be due on or around April 2024. For this current update, Metro will base its future service plans and fare structures on its Fiscal Year 2025 budget, once approved by Metro's Board of Directors. Those assumptions will be carried forward through future years. The general timing and schedule for FY2025 budget approval should align with the Visualize 2050 schedule. As funding discussions for a more sustainable, predictable funding strategy evolve for Metro's capital and operating needs, Metro will work with TPB to update service and fare assumptions in the next relevant update of the long-range plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at adavis5@wmata.com if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Allison H. Davis
Senior Vice President, Planning and Sustainability
Department of Planning and Performance