



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director  
**SUBJECT:** Item 1: Public Comments for June 2021 TPB Meeting  
**DATE:** June 16, 2021

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For the June TPB meeting, the board received 14 comments. This includes 11 comments that were received via email and 3 letters that are attached to this memo. TPB staff consolidated all comments into this document. This document will be available to the public and all members of the board and can be found at [MWCOG.org/tpbmtg](http://MWCOG.org/tpbmtg).



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National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Item 1 Virtual Comment Opportunity

Dear Transportation Planning Board:

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (“CCAN”), I write to the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) urging A) adoption of necessary actions to meet the COG goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 and B) in support of Montgomery County Council Member Evan Glass’ resolution that TPB model a climate friendly plan in addition to the proposed Visualize 2045 plan.

Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), as well as electric vehicles and clear cars, is essential to meeting our climate targets. Providing more travel options, putting jobs and housing closer together, and improving access to transit would help reduce per capita VMT. Importantly, these transportation strategies are crucial to supporting COG’s land use and equity goals.

The resolution by Montgomery County Council Member Evan Glass would provide important information that decision makers lack - an apples-to-apples comparison of the proposed Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) versus a climate-friendly plan. A climate-friendly plan would include land use and transportation strategies similar to those already included in the COG Climate and Energy Action Plan that would reduce VMT and help shift travel to more sustainable non-auto modes.

Sincerely,

Zander Pellegrino  
Northern Virginia Organizer  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 720  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
[zander@chesapeakeclimate.org](mailto:zander@chesapeakeclimate.org)

June 15, 2021

Hon. Charles Allen  
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Re: TPB Draft CLRP and Resolution by TPB Board Member Evan Glass

Chair Allen and members of the TPB:

We hope you all agree that climate change is an existential threat. You also know that transportation is our number one source of emissions and that electrical vehicles will not be enough to get us to the COG and national goals of a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030. The last CLRP (2018) is only estimated to reduce CO2 by 23% by 2045,

In the COG scientific and statistically significant Voices of the Region Survey, 84% of the region's residents indicated they want elected officials to prioritize climate change in transportation plans. Public comment on Visualize 2045 has overwhelmingly supported a plan that addresses climate change.

Therefore, we urge you to address the issues raised in Councilmember Glass' resolution and by many other members of the TPB seeking a CLRP that more effectively addresses climate change. At a minimum, we urge you in adopting the draft CLRP for air conformity modeling, to concurrently commit to the TPB to adopting a new CLRP by 2024 that meets COG's climate goals. This includes conducting a rigorous initial climate strategy analysis this year (not just an academic exercise) and beginning immediately in 2022, developing the next CLRP by 2024.

We are running out of time. We need your leadership.

Thank you.

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director

Bill Pugh  
Senior Policy Fellow

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Dear Chair Allen,

The Sierra Club Montgomery County Group strongly encourages you to support the resolution sponsored by Montgomery County Councilmember Glass that calls for the TPB to conduct modeling of a climate-friendly plan and the proposed Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) in order to accurately compare the climate consequences of the alternative scenarios. The climate-friendly plan would reflect the direction the TPB board decided in December to "require its member agencies to prioritize investments on projects, programs and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals...". There also was recognition that meeting adopted greenhouse gas emission targets "...will require a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions in Visualize 2045."

Note that Councilmember Glass' resolution would not remove member agency projects from the CLRP but would provide decision makers with more information regarding the impact of the proposed plan on climate change.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gases. There must be a change of investment and focus away from perpetuating auto-dependency and more towards transit, biking and pedestrian improvements, as well as transit-oriented development to reduce vehicle miles traveled and help the region meet its equity, sustainability, and mobility goals.

In summary, we believe the Glass resolution deserves your support and urge you to support the resolution. Thank you for your consideration.

-Shruti Bhatnagar

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My name is Tiziana Bottino and I am a resident of Prince William County. I would like to strongly encourage the Transportation Planning Board invest in transportation infrastructure that will move us towards 2030 climate and equity goals and away from car-centric projects.

- 1) Complete the TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study and review it thoroughly at the regional and jurisdictional levels through the first quarter of 2022.
- 2) develop a set of transportation policies and projects, by the end of 2022, which would be implementable at the jurisdictional and regional levels, consistent with the recommendations of the Climate Change Mitigation Study, that, when fully implemented will assure the region will meet its climate change mitigation goals
- 3) Each jurisdiction must commit to take actions to officially adopt the projects and policies developed to attain the region's climate goals within the transportation

sector, and advance these projects into the region's LRTP for a mid-term update to be completed in 2024

-Tiziana Bottino

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Transportation Planning Board members.

As the U.S. Secretary of Transportation has eloquently said, "Every transportation decision is a climate decision whether we acknowledge it or not. And it's not just about electric vehicles, ..." -- [@SecretaryPete](#)

I agree with Sec. Pete and ask that you take action to provide more travel options and improving access to transit would to reduce per capita VMT and also help the region meet its equity and mobility goals, and ensure these options are addressed in modeling of future scenarios.

The resolution by Montgomery County Council Member Evan Glass would provide important information that decision makers lack - an apples-to-apples comparison of the proposed Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) versus a climate-friendly plan. A climate-friendly plan would include land use and transportation strategies similar to those already included in the COG Climate and Energy Action Plan that would reduce VMT and help shift travel to more sustainable non-auto modes.

The current resolution by CM Glass would not remove member agency projects from the CLRP, rather it would give decisionmakers more information regarding the climate consequences of the proposed plan and enable them to make an informed decision on it in spring of 2022.

TPB could conduct the apples-to-apples modeling of the CLRP and alternative scenarios in the Glass resolution as part of the separate Climate Change study staff is doing this year.

In summary, please ensure that the region's action to address Climate change are included in future forecasts and modeling

-Jim Durham, Alexandria VA

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Dear TPB:

Re: Resolution sponsored by Evan Glass --

I strongly encourage support of Council member Glass's resolution to examine climate change impacts of all projects endorsed by the TPB.

Such an approach may lead TPB to more enthusiastically embrace 21st century transportation options -- transit, biking, walking. On the flip side, perhaps this approach will

underline the futility of investing in highway expansion (e.g., Gov Hogan's misguided 270-495 proposal), which will add to GHG emissions.

On behalf of myself and my children, thank you for your attention to this important matter.

-David W. Sears, Bethesda MD

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Dear Transportation Planning Board Members:

Lewinsville Faith in Action urges you to enthusiastically support the Resolution submitted by Montgomery County Councilmember and TPB Board Member Evan Glass, under which the TPB would develop Alternative No-Build and Alternative Build scenarios for “Visualize 2045” to help position TPB to achieve its climate and equity goals. Time is of the essence, and this important modeling work cannot be postponed until a subsequent revision.

The climate crisis is here, and getting worse with every day of inaction. So we salute the Board’s 22 to 0 decision in December to “require its member agencies to prioritize investments on projects, programs, and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” and its recognition that this would “require a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions in Visualize 2045.”

Focusing on climate is not only necessary, but popular: some 84% of the region’s residents think “elected officials need to consider the impacts of climate change when planning transportation in the future.”

However, Visualize 2045 currently echoes the plan approved in 2018, and relies, for example, on 7-year-old telecommuting data from 2014. This is unfortunate, because circumstances have changed – telecommuting increased by 2019, and post-pandemic will possibly be much higher. This could dramatically change how TPB should plan for the future, when demand for additional road projects may be much lower than out-of-date data suggests.

Smart planning should not only rely less on new road projects, but also place greater emphasis on transit projects. As the Glass Resolution notes, the region’s residents “want to walk and bike more, drive less, and support transit if it is frequent and reliable.” And transit is crucial to essential workers, as the pandemic has shown.

By developing and modeling these alternative scenarios, the Board will be able to compare the existing Visualize 2045 draft with a climate-friendly alternative that by focusing on reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving transit options would help TPB meet its climate and equity goals.

For these reasons we urge you to enthusiastically support the Glass Resolution, so TPB has the most relevant information on which to plan for a transportation future that is cleaner, safer, and healthier for all the region's residents.

-John Clewett

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Chair Wheeler/Supervisor Angry,

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) will be taking up a resolution at their June 16th meeting regarding a Visualize 2045 Alternative Build Scenario that would aim to achieve TPB climate and equity goals through the use of transportation demand management, transit, and land use strategies consistent with regional policy goals, a modified regional project list that reduces the number and scale of road capacity expansion projects in accordance with anticipated reduced travel demand, and with particular focus on public transportation and pedestrian/bicycle improvements needed to serve mobility disadvantaged populations. **This is being brought forward because the recently submitted project updates to Visualize 2045 will not meet the TPB climate and equity goals.**

Due to the time and resource constraints at this point in the Visualize 2045 update process, Active Prince William recommends Prince William County support the following action plan to support meeting TPB climate and equity goals:

- 1) Commit to completing the TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study and review it thoroughly at the regional and jurisdictional levels through the first quarter of 2022.
- 2) Formally commit to assisting the TPB to develop a set of transportation policies and projects, by the end of 2022, which would be implementable at the jurisdictional and regional levels, consistent with the recommendations of the Climate Change Mitigation Study, that, when fully implemented will assure the region will meet its climate change mitigation goals
- 3) Commit to take actions to officially adopt the projects and policies developed to attain the region's climate goals within the transportation sector, and advance these projects into the region's LRTP for a mid-term update to be completed in 2024

As voting members of the TPB, this is an opportunity for Prince William County to be a transportation planning leader as it relates to climate and equity in the region. Supporting this initiative aligns with [PWC BOCS Resolution 20-773: Regional Climate Mitigation and Resiliency Goals](#) and the [Prince William County Equity and Inclusion Policy](#).

The updated mobility chapter of the comprehensive plan should be aligned with this action plan. Prince William County should also advocate these measures be included as the starting point for the next NVTATransaction Plan. To support this the Prince William County

should advocate that the General Assembly act to modify the NVTA statute to align with your climate and equity goals.

The climate is not waiting. The time to act is now.

-Active Prince William

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At this time, it is increasingly obvious that carbon footprint must be considered in all matters, especially transportation, a major source of greenhouse gasses. I'm not going to waste your time getting into details. That's your speciality, and job. If it were 1970, I could talk about what will happen if.... Now, IT IS HAPPENING, and more quickly than we imagined. Climate disruption will bring irreversible changes making life as we know it impossible. My ask: Make sure "carbon footprint" is considered in every decision.

In appreciation of your challenging work and confidence you will work for the changes a few decades ago we didn't see as absolutely necessary,

Dan Crawford  
Chair of the Roanoke Group, Sierra Club

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Dear Chair Allen:

If the TPB is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation to meet the MWCOC goal of 50% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030, it must \*measure\* and adjust the Visualize 2045 project list. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the region (42%).

But Visualize 2045 replicates many "old visions" of expanded highways, ignoring the fact that this will bring more cars onto the roads, increase VMT, enable people to live farther away and have them commute farther for their various trips?

Reducing VMT is essential. Providing more travel options, putting jobs and housing closer together, and improving access to transit would help reduce per capita VMT and also help the region meet its equity and mobility goals.

To change direction, we need to see the data about which projects will reduce GHG emissions, and help achieve land-use and equity goals. We must compare apples-to-apples. The resolution by Montgomery County Council Member Evan Glass will provide the information we need.



TPB is composed of leaders throughout our region. The climate crisis is here already, and we are the generation that makes the decisions that will affect the next generation. If we don't accept this responsibility, there will be no way to turn it back.

In particular, the 270/495 multi-billion dollar expansion project ignores goals related to GHG emissions and Equity. Please don't talk about toll roads (works well for the wealthy), don't say everyone will drive an EV (works well for the wealthy), don't say that transit can use the toll lanes for free (this highway is not a transit "network" and our front-line workers depend on a robust transit network.) The 270/495 expansion project is repeating all the stuff that got us into the climate crisis in the first place. And by doing "business as usual", we completely bypass any concerns about Equity.

Best Regards,

Tina Slater, Silver Spring MD

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Hi there,

I'm writing on behalf of Greater Greater Washington to request that TPB take action to meet MWCOG's goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. And, we support Councilmember Evan Glass' proposed resolution to undertake a climate-focused plan, because Visualize 2045 falls short of such climate targets.

GGWash understands that slashing greenhouse gases requires politically unpopular actions, like road and parking pricing, which will charge people for the public resources they eat up (currently for free or very cheap) when they drive single-occupancy vehicles; reallocating space on roads away from single-occupancy vehicles to bus lanes, protected bike lanes, and expanded sidewalks; and funding, rather than roads, those bus lanes, protected bike lanes, and expanded sidewalks (perhaps through the revenue raised by road pricing?). There's already enough data, like, globally to demonstrate that all of this works most effectively—more effectively than electric vehicles, even—to reduce greenhouse gases, because vehicle miles traveled are first and foremost what increase greenhouse gases.

But, should you need more backup to make these decisions, which are not tough ones but are certainly not palatable to many vocal constituents, CM Glass' resolution, which would give decisionmakers more information regarding the climate consequences of the proposed plan, has got you covered.

We at GGWash look forward to a more climate-friendly set of TPB and COG plans and actions going forward.

Alex Baca Policy Manager  
Greater Greater Washington

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The TPB has a unique opportunity to play an important role in combating the climate crisis we all face.

Reduction of vehicle miles traveled, transition to electric vehicles, and transit oriented development are important components in reducing the transportation greenhouse gas footprint.

The resolution by Montgomery County Council Member Evan Glass would provide important information that decision makers lack - by comparing the proposed Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) with a climate-friendly plan. The climate-friendly plan would include strategies similar to those already included in the COG Climate and Energy Action Plan that would reduce VMT and help shift travel to more sustainable alternatives.

The importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible can not be overstated. This goal must be accomplished in a fair and equitable manner.

Please approve the Glass resolution and make it easier to assure climate friendly transportation for our region.

-John Cartmill, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

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I am writing to strongly encourage you to support the resolution sponsored by Montgomery County Councilmember Glass that calls for the TPB to conduct modeling of a climate-friendly plan and the proposed Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) in order to accurately compare the climate consequences of the alternative scenarios. The climate-friendly plan would reflect the direction the TPB board decided in December to "require its member agencies to prioritize investments on projects, programs and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prioritize the aspirational strategies, and achieve COG's land use and equity goals...". There also was recognition that meeting adopted greenhouse gas emission targets "...will require a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions in Visualize 2045."

Councilmember Glass' resolution would not remove member agency projects from the CLRP but would provide decision makers with more information regarding the impact of the proposed plan on climate change.

With transportation the largest source of greenhouse gases, there must be a change of investment and focus away from perpetuating auto-dependency and more towards transit, biking and pedestrian improvements, as well as transit-oriented development to reduce vehicle miles traveled and help the region meet its equity, sustainability, and mobility goals.

Let me also note that public input on Visualize 2045 showed that 84% of the region's residents agree that "elected officials need to consider the impacts of climate change when planning transportation in the future."

In summary, the Glass resolution makes sense, would provide important information to the TPB on the climate impact of alternative scenarios, and deserves your support.

Brian Ditzler  
Silver Spring, MD

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COALITION

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June 14, 2021

The Honorable Charles Allen, Chair  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002-4239

RE: Visualize 2045 Update and Proposed Alternative Resolution

Dear Chairman Allen:

Climate change is a serious challenge facing our community and the Northern Virginia Transportation Business Coalition commends the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) for recognizing transportation's role in producing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and developing strategies through the 2021 Climate Change Mitigation Study to reach the region's stated GHG reduction goals by 2030 and beyond.

However, **we strongly urge you to reject any resolution that would require TPB staff to divert time and resources from the region's critically important Air Quality Conformity process.** Adding alternative scenarios now that are poorly defined and require significant additional TPB staff and resources will delay the current Air Quality Conformity Analysis and likely result in a freeze of federal funding and approvals for important regional transportation projects and agencies including WMATA.

In addition, **we urge you to reject any resolution that calls for the removal of projects from Visualize 2045.** Transportation projects provide a variety of benefits including economic development, mobility, and access to opportunity. Our roadways facilitate more than 80% of the total trips in our region, including half of the region's transit trips which are taken by bus (3.5% of total trips). Removing planned improvements would reduce access to jobs within a 45-minute commute for many TPB designated equity emphasis areas, significantly increase congestion, and elevate GHG emissions.

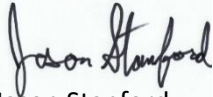
Rather than shifting transportation and land use planning and funding decisions away from local jurisdictions, **the TPB should work collaboratively with local leaders through the 2021 Climate Change Mitigation Study to identify effective strategies that we can adopt as quickly as possible to mitigate our GHG emissions.** These recommendations are due in December of this year and will ensure this process is fact-driven, cooperative, and produces realistic, actionable results.

Based on previous studies, TPB's analysis shows that individual transportation projects including highway and transit improvements have limited impact on reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and GHG emissions. In fact, building no new projects will still result in a 19% increase in VMT in our region by 2040. At the same time, according to the Clean Energy Action Plan, mode shift and travel behavior only account for 1.6% of the reductions in GHG needed to reach our 2030 goal. In contrast, vehicle technology and fuel strategies have the largest potential for GHG reduction from on-road transportation. And when combined with a clean energy grid, a national study showed a major shift to electric vehicles (EV) resulted in a 94% GHG reduction from the baseline forecast in 2050.

As we band together as a region to tackle this important challenge, the Coalition urges DC area elected officials to work together, trust your local transportation planning experts, focus on meaningful changes that produce real benefits, and avoid “quick fixes” that do little to address this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jason Stanford

President

Northern Virginia Transportation Business Coalition

## Northern Virginia Transportation Business Coalition Members

