
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

March 17, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Charles Allen, TPB Chair – DC Council
Anna Chamberlin – DDOT
Mark Rawlings -- DDOT
Kristin Calkins – DC Office of Planning
Brooke Pinto – DC Council
Ella Hanson – DC Council
Christina Henderson – DC Council
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – Maryland DOT
Adrian Boafo – Bowie
Jason Growth – Charles County
Reuben Collins – Charles County
Patrick Wojahn – College Park
Denise Mitchell – College Park
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
David Edmondson – City of Frederick
Dennis Enslinger – Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordan – Greenbelt
Mike Leszcz – Laurel
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Evan Glass – Montgomery County Legislative
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive
Deni Taveras – Prince George’s County Legislative
Bridget Donnell Newton – Rockville
Kacy Kostiuk – Takoma Park
Norman Whitaker – Virginia DOT
Maria Sinner – Virginia DOT
Canek Aguirre – Alexandria
Christian Dorsey – Arlington County
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
David Meyer – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Rodney Lusk – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Robert Brown – Loudoun County
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County
Pamela J. Sebesky – Manassas
Jeannette Rishell – Manassas Park
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Shyam Kannan – WMATA
Mark Phillips – WMATA

Sandra Jackson – FHWA
Tammy Stidham – NPS

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Chuck Bean
Lyn Erickson
Mark Moran
Tim Canan
Andy Meese
Nick Ramfos
Tom Gates
Bryan Hayes
Abigail Zenner
Deborah Etheridge
Charlene Howard
Dusan Vuksan
Arianna Koudounas
Erin Morrow
Karen Armendariz
Leonardo Pineda
Sergio Ritacco
Kenneth Joh
Jen Desimone
Stacy Cook
John Swanson
Elisa Walton – CAC

Materials referenced in the minutes can be found here:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2021/3/17/transportation-planning-board/>

Virtual Participation Procedures, Member Roll Call, and Virtual Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Allen said that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast and that the process for asking questions and voting would be the same as past meetings. After each item members would be asked to comment or vote by jurisdiction.

Ms. Erickson conducted a roll call. Members that were present are listed on the first page of the minutes.

Referring to a document posted under Item 1, Ms. Erickson summarized the comments received, which largely related to the update to Visualize 2045.

1. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

As a correction to the draft minutes, Chair Allen noted that Kacy Kostiuk had attended the February meeting, but she was left off the minutes.

Mr. Jordan moved approval of the minutes, as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mitchell and was approved unanimously.

2. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted summary, Mr. Groth said the Technical Committee met on March 5. He said the agenda included the following TPB agenda items: the draft FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program, the FY 2022 Commuter Connections Planning Work Program, and results of the Voices of the Region survey. He said the following items were included for information and discussion: COG 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan; the TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021; TPB Resiliency Study; Briefing on the impacts of COVID-19 on Enhanced Mobility grant projects; the new Transit Within Reach program; and other business.

3. CAC REPORT

Referring to the posted report, Ms. Walton said the CAC met on March 11. She said the group was briefed on the Voices of the Region survey results and learned about the history of the CAC and its role with the TPB. She said the meeting included small-group discussions which gave members the chance to get to know each other and discuss the year ahead.

4. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Referring to the posted materials, Mr. Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on March 5. He said the committee approved the allocation of leftover federal Transportation Alternative Program funds for the District of Columbia to nine projects to which the TPB had previously allocated funding. He said the committee also amended the District of Columbia's portion of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These amendments included projects related to the H Street Bridge and the 11th Street Bridge Park.

Mr. Srikanth highlighted a few items from the Director's Report. He said the TPB would be holding a work session on April 21 at 10:30 a.m. prior to the board meeting. The work session would address the proposed changes to the projects in the TPB's long-range transportation plan Visualize 2045.

Mr. Srikanth also noted that the TPB is currently seeking and accepting applications from organizations in the region that provide transportation service to older adults and people with disabilities to offset the fiscal impacts of disruptions these organizations may have experienced due to the pandemic. He said the applications would be due on March 4. He said that at the TPB meeting on April 21, staff plans to bring recommendations for allocating the \$560,000 that has been made available through the Federal Coronavirus Pandemic Relief Act.

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Allen noted that the pandemic began one year ago and since that time the TPB and its partner agencies have conducted business virtually. He said this anniversary is not a distinction that was sought or something which should be celebrated, but it is something that is important to mark. But he noted that there is a lot of opportunity in the next few months to act with intentionality to make sure that part of the region's recovery is focused on equity.

6. AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2021 UPWP, AND FY 2021 CARRYOVER FUNDING TO FY 2022

Referring to the posted material, Ms. Erickson said that the TPB would be voting on three actions: 1) Adoption of Resolution R13-2021, which would amend the 2021 UPWP to remove funding to be "carried over" to FY 2022; 2) Adoption of Resolution R14-2021, which was an action to approve "carryover" funding from FY 2021 to FY 2022, and 3) Adoption of Resolution R15-2021, which was an action to approve FY 2022 UPWP. She explained that the total FY 2022 revenue comes from three "buckets" of funding through the state DOTs: "New" fiscal year funding (Federal FY 2021); "Old" funding from last year's UPWP (FY 2020) – obligated to the MPO but not spent (called "unexpended"); and "Carryover" funding from current year UPWP (FY 2021) that staff anticipate not being able to spend by June 30, 2021. She said the carryover funding was \$2,787,377 from Tasks 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 in the UPWP. She said the total budget for the FY 2022 UPWP is \$18,035,794.

She said that no comments were received on the draft UPWP and carryover. She did note, however, that at the last meeting Mr. Snyder asked staff to develop a crosswalk depicting how the tasks in the UPWP correspond to TPB policy objectives. She presented a table with that information.

She said that after the board's actions, staff would submit the FY 2022 UPWP to the USDOT for approval, which typically takes approximately 60 days. In the meantime, the TPB's federal and state partners would provide authorization to begin spending from the UPWP, beginning on July 1.

Chair Allen asked about the timing for the TPB's greenhouse gas emissions study. He noted that the study would not be completed until December. He asked if that timing would preclude the study from being included in the forthcoming update of the long-range plan.

Ms. Erickson explained that funding for such projects, which extend over multiple fiscal years, is split between different UPWPs.

Mr. Srikanth confirmed that the climate change mitigation study has already begun in the current fiscal year and it will continue with funding from the next fiscal year. He further noted that the TPB's long-range transportation plan will not be adopted until June of next year and the results of the climate change mitigation study will be available this December. For the study, he noted, the board asked for the identification of specific levels of outcomes that need to be attained or achieved within the transportation sector to help reduce greenhouse gases within the transportation sector, according to the goals that have been set. So, the TPB will have up to five months to discuss the study and to integrate any of its findings into the new long-range plan. He said that over the past 11 years, the TPB has been engaged in at least four different studies on greenhouse gases, but those studies have been separate from the long-range plan as a document. He said this will be the first time in which the TPB will have the opportunity to incorporate findings from such a study into the plan.

Chair Allen asked if the timing that Mr. Srikanth described would provide the TPB with the opportunity to evaluate projects that had been previously submitted.

Mr. Srikanth said the projects submitted for inclusion in the constrained element of the long-range plan, which the board is scheduled to approve in June for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis, could not be individually assessed for greenhouse gas impacts. He said that TPB staff does not have the resources or the tools to do such a project-level analysis. He did note, however, that the project submissions, which will be approved in June, will be included in a regional-level air quality conformity analysis which will also forecast greenhouse gas emissions from all of the projects in the constrained element of the plan.

Mr. Kannan said it appeared there was a risk that the TPB would be inheriting and approving a list of projects that are not geared towards a climate change target or goal, and that only at a later point this year, such a goal or target would be set. But nonetheless, the board would be including those previously untargeted projects in the plan.

Mr. Srikanth said the plan that the TPB adopted in 2018 reduces greenhouse gas by 23 percent below 2005 levels between now and 2045, and this would occur while accommodating a 30 percent increase in employment and adding 1.3 million people. He said that even though these reductions fall short of the 50 percent that the region has established to reduce greenhouse gases by 2030, it is moving towards that direction. He noted that on a number of other measures— including reduction in the growth of VMT and increases in teleworking and walking and bicycling — progress has been made when comparing the long-range plan from 2010 with the 2018 plan. He noted that for large-scale policy objectives, such as equity and safety, it would not be realistic to expect one plan to achieve complete success. He reiterated that the climate change mitigation study would be very critical because it is going to identify specific levels of outcomes to achieve and work towards. However, he said he suspected it would be extremely challenging to achieve those outcomes with one plan update.

Chair Allen said that, based on Mr. Srikanth's comments, he understood that the projects that would be moved forward by October following the air quality conformity analysis may collectively represent a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. However, the results from the climate change study will be coming in December, which would be occurring after the project submissions, but the findings from that study would be used to evaluate updates to the projects in the long-range plan in subsequent years.

Mr. Srikanth said Chair Allen's understanding was correct. He further noted that the forthcoming analysis for the air quality conformity analysis, which will include greenhouse gas forecasts, will provide data about the gap that will need to be addressed in the future to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Mr. Snyder noted that the discussion highlighted the disconnect between large policy pronouncements and the actual capabilities of projects to meet those policy objectives. He suggested that an agenda item for the next or future meetings might examine how the region's policy objectives might be better aligned with the grassroots development of individual projects. He further noted that the region is very diverse, including geographically diverse, and in no way did he want to make it difficult for any part of the region to prosper. He noted that different parts of the region have different needs. He said he did want to emphasize that the region is making progress on environmental policies, and hopefully equity policies as well.

Ms. Rishell thanked Mr. Snyder for his comments. She emphasized that the issues of the inner ring localities are different from the issues and needs of the outer ring localities.

Ms. Umstatt said she wanted to echo Ms. Rishell's comments, noting that outer jurisdictions do not typically have densities that are easily served by transit.

Mr. Lewis thanked the previous speakers for their comments. He said the region's transportation network is complex and decision makers need to take into account the differing needs of different parts of the region, while also meeting the region's goals, including environmental goals.

Ms. Kostiuk said she thinks the forthcoming climate change study is very important, but she was concerned that not enough is being done in the short term. She said she understood that VMT may be reduced per capita, but it is also true that the region's population is growing. She said she thought this long-range plan represented an opportunity to be a bit bolder than the region might be considering otherwise. She said it often feels confusing that the board is told that the impacts of projects cannot be known because analysis cannot be done for individual projects, but nonetheless, the board is tasked with approving those projects for inclusion in the plan. She noted that individual projects do impact the larger scale. She further reiterated Chair Allen's comments from an earlier meeting that the recovery from COVID provides a new opportunity to kind of rebuild the system in a better way. Finally, she suggested it would be helpful for COG staff to brief the TPB on how COG's climate plan fits into the TPB's long-range plan.

Mr. Wojahn said he would like to hear more from staff about how the region can be more flexible with its long-range planning. He said he understood that federal requirements require the development of plans many years in advance, but he said the region needs to be aggressive about how we are approaching climate to meet the region's goals. Echoing Ms. Kostiuk's comments, he asked that staff provide more information about how the TPB's long-range plan ties into the region's plans for climate change and greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Chair Allen summed up some of the discussion, noting that members spoke about the need for regional balance, but also calling for urgency regarding climate change.

Chair Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R13-2021 to amend the FY 2021 budget and work program. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Sebesky, and was approved with one abstention from Ms. Newton.

Chair Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R14-2021 to carry over work activities and funding to the next fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Ms. Russell and was approved unanimously.

7. THE FY 2022 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Chair Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R15-2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and was approved unanimously.

Ms. Erickson called attention to the work session on April 21 at 10:30, which would provide the opportunity to discuss the projects submitted for the constrained element of Visualize 2045.

8. THE FY 2022 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM

Referring to the posted material, Mr. Ramfos said he had briefed the board on the draft FY 2022 Commuter Connections Work Program at the previous month's meeting. He said no comments were received and hence, no changes were made in the document. He described some focused work that will be undertaken as part of COVID recovery efforts, including educating the public about the benefits of using public transit and all alternative modes as the recovery kicks into gear, as well as giving attention to transit-dependent communities that were hit hardest during the pandemic.

Chair Allen made a motion to adopt Resolution R16-2021 to adopt the work program and budget for fiscal year 2022. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Sebesky and was approved unanimously.

9. PRIORITY AIRPORT GROUND ACCESS PROJECTS

Referring to the posted material, Ms. Koudounas briefed the Board on the priority projects included in Visualize 2045 that will support airport ground access. It was noted that as Visualize 2045 is updated these updates will be reflected in future iterations of the project list contained in the presentation and the accompanying report, the Comprehensive Regional Air System Plan (RASP). Ms. Koudounas recommended that the projects, programs, and policies identified in the presentation (total of 33 highway projects and one transit project) be given priority consideration for implementation.

Mr. Emmett Jordan of Greenbelt expressed concerns about there being only one mass transit connection through the MARC Penn Line between Prince George's County and BWI Airport.

Mr. Erenrich said that the Purple Line should be included as a priority project.

Ms. Koudounas said that in the conversations between the MAA and MWAA, it was determined that the Purple Line from their perspective should be included in the list of projects, however it should not be considered a priority from their perspective in terms of connectivity.

Ms. Kostiuk echoed Mr. Erenrich's comment to include the Purple Line in the list of projects. Ms. Kostiuk expressed concerns about the number of highway projects, and the lack of transit projects.

Ms. Koudounas said that the purpose of the study is to look at airports exclusively. She agreed that the equity and climate lens should be used. Ms. Koudounas said that the draft document will be updated as updates are made to Visualize 2045.

Ms. Kostiuk said a project list with more of a transit focus would be ideal.

Mr. Lewis echoed previous comments about the importance of the Purple Line to help people connect to BWI Airport.

Ms. Taveras agreed with other comments about the Purple Line not being included in the projects. Ms. Taveras expressed confusion about why the Purple Line was not included.

Ms. Koudounas invited volunteers to provide comments during the Aviation Technical Subcommittee meeting next Thursday and confirmed that the comments shared will be discussed further. Ms. Koudounas said that the Environmental Impact Statement that was done for the Purple Line concluded that the Purple Line would impact connectivity to BWI Airport.

Mr. Snyder commented that the report suggests reducing congestion as the main objective. Mr. Snyder questioned whether the projects in the report are the best way to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and make the airports more accessible.

Mr. Kannan asked whether there was a decision up front to not include the Maryland Maglev study in the analysis.

Ms. Koudounas said that there was a decision made up front to not include the project due to the EIS not being complete yet.

Mr. Kannan raised a question about how projects that do not receive federal funding are evaluated by the TPB. Mr. Kannan asked if major multibillion-dollar projects that do not receive federal funding should be considered in the TPB's evaluation.

Mr. Srikanth responded that any such project from a member agency or a non-member agency has to come to the TPB for formal inclusion in its plan and in the air quality conformity analysis. Mr. Srikanth said this both includes projects that are federally funded and projects that are privately funded.

Mr. Srikanth said that once a locally preferred alternative has been identified, the TPB would like to invite MDOT to brief the TPB on the Maglev project.

Chair Allen in closing statement added that he does not expect the Maglev project to be completely privately funded and expressed appreciation for Mr. Kannan's comment.

10. REGIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY: CHANGE IN OBSERVED TRIPS SINCE 2007/08

Mr. Joh referred to the presentation and briefed the board on the Regional Travel Survey, highlighting some trends and differences between the 2007/2008 survey and the 2017/2018 survey.

Mr. Allen asked about how this data can provide a baseline considering all the changes the region has faced in 2020. He asked for a crosswalk of the key takeaways that could inform future planning.

Mr. Joh noted that travel in the region changed drastically since the survey was completed. He noted that as things return to regular business, this data can help planners plan for the future. He also explained that this survey is used for the travel demand model.

Mr. Kannan made three comments, He noted that the commute trip is only one part of a bigger travel picture and that planners need to look beyond just the commute. He also noted that the survey shows how many traditionally underrepresented groups are forced to travel further and face more burdens. His third point was a comment about climate change and the need to take action to address it soon.

Mr. Alcorn also agreed with Mr. Kannan's comment about commute trips and noted that WMATA's funding structure is dependent on them. He also noted that there is more TOD development in the suburban areas and that is making a difference in how people travel.

Mr. Snyder asked how the survey captured remote work.

Mr. Joh explained that the survey did ask about telework but also noted that this survey is focused on all types of travel and not just the commute.

Mr. Wojahn asked about equity and requested a survey breakdown by race and ethnicity.

Mr. Joh explained that staff have examined the findings based on race and ethnicity and have presented those finding to the board in previous briefings. He said that he appreciated the comment because the data can be helpful in looking at equity questions.

Ms. Kostiuk asked about the decline in household trips and how much influence delivery services have had on that decrease. She wondered if there were more freight trips instead of household trips. She also asked about correlation and causation when looking at those decreases.

Mr. Joh explained that the survey was only looking at household travel and not at freight travel but that the survey did ask about delivery services and one out of three households in the region used delivery services. To the second question he explained that the survey cannot identify what caused the decrease in trips, and therefore conclusions regarding causation would be speculative based on other data.

Ms. Taveras noted that many African Americans have been pushed out of the District of Columbia due to housing affordability concerns. She wondered if this displacement showed up in the survey, including, for example, the effects of gentrification on trip lengths. She also noted the decrease in WMATA rail trips and the increased competition from other modes of travel. She asked if this ridership decline was linked to the higher cost of maintenance on WMATA. She said that a decline in transit ridership and services would place a burden on local jurisdictions.

Mr. Joh said that displacement is one factor that could explain longer commuting distances in commute trips. He further noted that transit rail trips are down not just in the region rather nationally, with one of the reasons being the increase in number of trips being made by bicycling, walking and ride hailing.

Mr. Srikanth explained that the data in the presentation is looking back and it reflects many factors, including socioeconomic factors that affect transit ridership. He noted that Metrorail ridership had been increasing right up to the pre-pandemic period. He noted other factors such as increases in telework. He noted that there is some data showing that a significant percentage of people who telework also ride transit. Looking to the future, he noted that the region cannot realize the growth that it is anticipating without investing in public transit. He noted that the three states came together to commit to additional dedicated revenue for WMATA. He said this commitment to funding needs to be looked at from the perspective of return on investment, not just for mobility and accessibility, but also to our environmental and equity goals.

11. TPB CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION STUDY OF 2021

This item was deferred.

13. ADJOURN

No other business was brought to the board. The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.