



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Steering Committee Actions and Report of the Director
DATE: October 13, 2016

The attached materials include:

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



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Steering Committee Actions
DATE: October 13, 2016

At its meeting on October 7, the TPB Steering Committee approved the following resolutions to amend the FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that are exempt from the air quality conformity requirement:

- SR9-2017: To include \$1 million in federal and state funding to widen and upgrade VA Route 7 between Reston Avenue and Colvin Forest Drive in Fairfax County; as requested by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- SR10-2017: To include \$6.5 million in federal and state funding to widen Neabsco Mills Road between Smoke Court and US Route 1 in Prince William County, as requested by VDOT
- SR11-2017: To include \$2.1 in federal and District funding for the rehabilitation of historic culverts between Fulton and 34th Streets NW and the intersection of Normanstone Drive and 30th Street NW, as requested by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT)

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.”

The Steering Committee also discussed an upcoming TPB-sponsored conference that will focus on opportunities for improving traffic incident response, to be held on November 2.

Attachments

- SR9-2017
- SR10-2017
- SR11-2017

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

**RESOLUTION ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2015-2020 TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), THAT IS EXEMPT FROM THE AIR QUALITY
CONFORMITY REQUIREMENT, TO INCLUDE FUNDING FOR THE
VA ROUTE 7 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, AS REQUESTED BY
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT)**

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

WHEREAS, the TIP is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as a basis and condition for all federal funding assistance to state, local and regional agencies for transportation improvements within the Washington planning area; and

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2014 the TPB adopted the FY 2015-2020 TIP; and

WHEREAS, in the attached letter of September 29, 2016, VDOT has requested that the FY 2015-2020 TIP be amended to include \$957,000 in Advanced Construction (AC) for planning and engineering (PE) and \$43,000 in Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funding for the VA Route 7 Corridor Improvements project between Reston Avenue and 500 feet east of Colvin Forest Drive in Fairfax County, as described in the attached materials, and

WHEREAS, this project is already included in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2015 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2015-2020 TIP;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board amends the FY 2015-2020 TIP to include \$957,000 in AC for PE and \$43,000 in RSTP funding for the VA Route 7 Corridor Improvements project between Reston Avenue and 500 feet east of Colvin Forest Drive in Fairfax County, as described in the attached materials.

Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board Steering Committee at its regular meeting on October 7, 2016.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

CHARLES A. KILPATRICK, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

September 29, 2016

The Honorable Timothy Lovain, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: National Capital Region FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment
for Route 7 Corridor Improvements, Phase 2, UPC 106917

Dear Chairman Lovain:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requests an amendment to the FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add funding for the Preliminary Engineering phase of the Route 7 Corridor Improvements project, Phase 2 in Fairfax County, Virginia. The project includes adding one travel lane in both east bound and west bound directions, intersection improvements, and construction pedestrian and bicycle facilities on both sides of the highway.

The amendment adds approximately \$1 million to the TIP in FY 2017. Approximately \$43,000 in Federal RSTP funding is being programmed. The remainder is Federal Advance Construction (AC) funding. VDOT staff has entered the amendment in the TPB's iTIP online database. The funds are part of the total federal and state estimates included in VDOT's financial plan for the 2014 CLRP update. The Route 7 Corridor Improvements project is included in the approved Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

VDOT requests that this amendment be approved by the Transportation Planning Board's Steering Committee at its meeting on October 7, 2016. VDOT's representative will attend the meeting and will be available to answer any questions about the amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Helen Cuervo'.

Helen Cuervo, P.E.
District Administrator

cc:

Ms. Larrie Henley, VDOT

Ms. Rene'e Hamilton, VDOT-NoVA

Ms. Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT-NoVA

Ms. Susan Shaw, P.E., VDOT-NoVA

Mr. Norman Whitaker, AICP, VDOT-NoVA

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
CAPITAL COSTS (in \$1,000)**

FY 2015 - 2020

	Source	Fed/St/Loc	Previous Funding	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Source Total	
Primary											
VA 7, Widen, Upgrade											
TIP ID: 6539		Agency ID: 106917		Title: RTE 7 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS				Project Cost: \$98,000 Complete: 2024			
Facility: VA 7 Leesburg Pike		AC	0/100/0				957	a	957		
From: Reston Avenue		RSTP	80/20/0				43	a	43		
To: 500 ft. E of Colvin Forest Drive											
Total Funds:										1,000	
Description: Phase 2 for Rt 7 Corridor Improvements to add one travel lane both EB and WB; upgrade intersections; and construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities EB and WB											
Amendment: Add New Project								Approved on: 10/7/2016			
Amend project into the FY 2015-2020 TIP with \$957,000 in advanced construction and \$43,000 in RSTP and matching funds for planning and engineering in FY 2017.											

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

**RESOLUTION ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2015-2020 TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), THAT IS EXEMPT FROM THE AIR QUALITY
CONFORMITY REQUIREMENT, TO INCLUDE FUNDING FOR THE
NEABSCO MILLS ROAD WIDENING PROJECT, AS REQUESTED BY
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT)**

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

WHEREAS, the TIP is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as a basis and condition for all federal funding assistance to state, local and regional agencies for transportation improvements within the Washington planning area; and

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2014 the TPB adopted the FY 2015-2020 TIP; and

WHEREAS, in the attached letter of September 30, 2016, VDOT has requested that the FY 2015-2020 TIP be amended to include \$3.548 million in Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funding in FY 2017 for planning and engineering (PE) and right-of-way acquisition (ROW); \$2 million in revenue sharing in FY 2017 for ROW; \$453,000 in Advanced Construction (AC) in FY 2017 for ROW and \$453,000 in AC conversion in FY 2018 for ROW for the Neabsco Mills Road Widening project between Smoke Court and US Route 1 in Prince William County, as described in the attached materials, and

WHEREAS, this project is already included in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the 2015 CLRP Amendment and the FY 2015-2020 TIP;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board amends the FY 2015-2020 TIP to include \$3.548 million in RSTP funding in FY 2017 for PE and ROW; \$2 million in revenue sharing in FY 2017 for ROW; \$453,000 in AC in FY 2017 for ROW and \$453,000 in AC conversion in FY 2018 for ROW for the Neabsco Mills Road Widening project between Smoke Court and US Route 1 in Prince William County, as described in the attached materials.

Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board Steering Committee at its regular meeting on October 7, 2016.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

CHARLES A. KILPATRICK, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

September 30, 2016

The Honorable Timothy Lovain, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, MWCOG
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: National Capital Region FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment
for Neabsco Mills Road Widening, UPC 107947

Dear Chairman Lovain:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requests an amendment to the FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add funding for the Preliminary Engineering and Right-of-Way phases of the Neabsco Mills Road Widening project in Prince William County, Virginia. The project will widen Neabsco Mills Road to four lanes between Smoke Ct. (S. of Dale Blvd) and Route 1.

The amendment adds approximately \$6.5 million to the TIP in FY 2017 and FY 2018 for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way. Funding sources include State Revenue Sharing, RSTP, and Federal Advance Construction. Total estimated project cost is \$26.3 million. VDOT staff has entered the amendment in the TPB's iTIP online database. The funds are part of the total federal and state estimates included in VDOT's financial plan for the 2014 CLRP update. The Neabsco Mills Road Widening project is included in the approved Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

VDOT requests that this amendment be approved by the Transportation Planning Board's Steering Committee at its meeting on October 7, 2016. VDOT's representative will attend the meeting and will be available to answer any questions about the amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Cuervo".

Helen Cuervo, P.E.
District Administrator, Northern Virginia District

Chairman Timothy Lovain
September 30, 2016
Page 2

cc:

Ms. Larrie Henley, VDOT
Ms. Rene'e Hamilton, VDOT-NoVA
Ms. Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT-NoVA
Dic Burke, VDOT-NoVA
Mr. Norman Whitaker, AICP, VDOT-NoVA

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
CAPITAL COSTS (in \$1,000)**

FY 2015 - 2020

	Source	Fed/St/Loc	Previous Funding	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Source Total	
Secondary											
Neabsco Mills Road											
TIP ID: 6541		Agency ID: 107947		Title: NEABSCO MILLS ROAD - Widen to 4 lanes				Project Cost: \$26,300 Complete: 2018			
Facility: Neabsco Mills Road		AC	80/20/0			453 b				453	
From: Smoke Court		AC Conversion	80/20/0				453 b			453	
To: US 1 Jefferson Davis Highway		REVSH	50/50/0			2,000 b				2,000	
		RSTP	80/20/0			1,700 a				3,548	
						1,848 b					
Total Funds:										6,454	

Description: Widen Neabsco Mills Road to 4 lanes between Smoke Ct (S. of Dale Blvd) and Route 1.

Amendment: Add New Project **Approved on: 10/7/2016**
 Amend project into the FY 2015-2020 TIP with \$3.548 million in RSTP funding in FY 2017; \$2 million in Revenue Sharing in FY 2017; \$453,000 in Advanced Construction in FY 2017; and \$453,000 in Advanced Construction Conversion in FY 2018.

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

**RESOLUTION ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2015-2020 TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), THAT IS EXEMPT FROM THE AIR QUALITY
CONFORMITY REQUIREMENT, TO INCLUDE FUNDING FOR THE
NORMANSTONE/FULTON STREET CULVERT AND LID PROJECT, AS REQUESTED
BY THE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DDOT)**

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

WHEREAS, the TIP is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as a basis and condition for all federal funding assistance to state, local and regional agencies for transportation improvements within the Washington planning area; and

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2014 the TPB adopted the FY 2015-2020 TIP; and

WHEREAS, in the attached letter of September 30, 2016, DDOT has requested that the FY 2015-2020 TIP be amended to include \$1.5 million in Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funding and \$600,000 in District funding for construction in FY 2017 for the Normanstone and Fulton Street Culvert and LID project, as described in the attached materials, and

WHEREAS, this project is exempt from the air quality conformity requirement, as defined in Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Transportation Conformity Regulations as of April 2012;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board amends the FY 2015-2020 TIP to include \$1.5 million in FLAP funding and \$600,000 in District funding for construction in FY 2017 for the Normanstone and Fulton Street Culvert and LID project, as described in the attached materials.

Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board Steering Committee at its regular meeting on October 7, 2016.

Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Administration

September 30, 2016

The Honorable Tim Lovain, Chairperson
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Chairman Lovain,

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) requests that the FY 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) be amended to add funding for Normanstone/Fulton Street Culvert and LID project.

The proposed amendment would add approximately \$1.5 million in Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) Grant and \$600,000 in District funds in FY 2017 for the construction involving rehabilitation of seven historic culverts between intersection of Fulton St/34th Street NW and intersection of Normanstone Dr. / 30th Street NW. The rehabilitation is necessary so that the culverts will continue to adequately be in service. The project also includes implementation of stormwater management facilities to enhance the environment through low impact development best management practices.

The project has gone through public review and comment during the design period. The funding sources have been identified, and the TIP will remain fiscally constrained. Therefore, DDOT requests that the TPB Steering Committee approve this amendment at its October 7, 2016 meeting.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Should you have questions regarding this amendment, please contact Mark Rawlings at (202) 671-2234 or by e-mail at mark.rawlings@dc.gov. Of course, feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

James Sebastian

Acting Associate Director, Planning and Sustainability Administration (PSA)

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
CAPITAL COSTS (in \$1,000)**

FY 2015 - 2020

Source	Fed/St/Loc	Previous Funding	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Source Total
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DDOT

Maintenance

Normanstone/Fulton Street Culvert & LID

TIP ID: 6194	Agency ID: Temp1315	Title: Normanstone/Fulton Street Culvert & LID	Complete:	Total Cost: \$2,200,000
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Facility: Normanstone Drive	FLAP	100/0/0		1,500 c	1,500
From: Fulton Street					
To: 34th Street	DC	0/100/0	2,200 c	600 c	600

Total Funds: 2,100

Description: This project repair seven culverts under Normanstone Drive, install linear bioretention cells along Fulton Street and Normanstone Drive, and mill and resurface both streets

Amendment: Add New Project **Approved on: 10/7/2016**
 The proposed amendment would add approximately \$1.5 million in Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) Grant and \$600,000 in District funds in FY 2017 for the construction involving rehabilitation of seven historic culverts between intersection of Fulton St/34th Street NW and intersection of Normanstone Dr. / 30th Street NW.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Letters Sent/Received
DATE: October 13, 2016

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



**National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board**

September 30th, 2016

Paul J. Wiedefeld
General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-2693

Re: Street Smart FY 2017 funding

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld:

On behalf of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) I am happy to inform you that the TPB will be launching its "Street Smart" Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign in FY 2017. This region-wide campaign promotes safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists including WMATA's transit riders as they walk or bike to and from bus stops and Metrorail stations. The campaign is funded by DDOT, the Maryland Highway Safety Office, the Virginia Highway Safety Office, and by WMATA. I am now asking that you consider renewing WMATA's contribution of \$150,000 for FY 2017.

The Street Smart campaign cautions drivers to slow down and watch out for people walking and biking. Messages are delivered in both English and Spanish via radio traffic sponsorships, TV commercials, online media, news stories, on-the-ground outreach, and outdoor media, including transit ads.

WMATA is a valued partner and funder of campaign. WMATA's financial contribution of \$150,000 accounted for one fifth of the FY 2016 budget of \$750,000. WMATA also ran pro bono transit advertising when space was available. WMATA staff served on the advisory group and helped plan the spring press event at the Silver Spring Transit Center.

The Street Smart campaign benefits to WMATA include: passenger safety messaging, advertising revenue, and partnership in a major public service program. Street Smart campaign deployed outreach teams at Metrorail stations, as well as on bus corridors with heavy pedestrian traffic, and placed advertising on WMATA buses. See the attached FY 2016 WMATA Summary and FY 2015 Annual Report for more details.

The Street Smart campaign has been successful in terms of increasing public awareness of the consequences of unsafe behaviors, changing reported pedestrian and motorist behavior, and leveraging earned media and local law enforcement. The transit advertising has been particularly effective. In our 2016 post-campaign survey, 79% of the pedestrians in the Washington region could recall at least one of the Street Smart ads, versus 68% of the motorists.

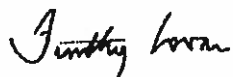
As a unified regional campaign, Street Smart benefits from economies of scale in production and purchase of advertising, greater leveraging of federal funding from multiple recipients, and greater media attention than would be possible for an individual agency safety campaign.

For funds to be available for the Fall 2016 campaign, funding commitment letters should be sent to Director of Transportation Planning, Kanti Srikanth, at the address below by October 15, 2016.

Paul J. Wiedefeld
September 30, 2016

Should you have any questions about the campaign or the requested voluntary contribution, please contact Kanti Srikanth at (202) 962-3257. Thank you for your participation in this program that addresses one of our region's most critical needs: pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Sincerely,



Timothy Lovain
Chair, National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

cc: Kanti Srikanth, Director of Transportation Planning, MWCOG
Patrick Lavin, Chief Safety Officer, WMATA
Shyam Kannan, Managing Director, Office of Planning, WMATA



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

October 11, 2016

The Honorable Don Beyer
United States House of Representatives
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

RE: TPB Comments on USDOT Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination and Planning Area Reform [Docket No. FHWA-2016-0016]

Dear Representative Beyer:

I am writing today to share with you the comments that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) recently submitted to USDOT concerning proposed changes to federal rules governing metropolitan transportation planning. Specifically, the new rules would change how the boundaries of metropolitan planning areas are defined and how metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) coordinate with one another in developing metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

The TPB, a diverse group of state and local transportation officials and elected representatives, and the federally designated MPO for the National Capital Region, voiced its unanimous concern that the negative unintended consequences of these proposed changes would significantly outweigh their real or perceived benefits.

The most onerous and impracticable change would be a requirement to develop a single Long-Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and set of performance targets covering a newly designated urbanized area extending from Virginia to New Jersey—nearly five times larger than the TPB's existing planning area. The mobility needs and local planning priorities in an area this big would vary so immensely that it would make it basically impossible to carry out a meaningful planning process. Given that such a process is required before transportation projects can receive federal funds, the proposed changes could threaten the timely delivery of critical infrastructure improvements and investments in our region.

In light of these and other concerns, the TPB respectfully requested that USDOT withdraw the proposed rulemaking and work with individual MPOs and States to remedy specific instances in which a lack of coordination might be hindering the metropolitan transportation planning process. In the attached pages, I invite you to read the TPB's detailed comments, as well as similar comments submitted by both the Maryland and Virginia departments of transportation.

Should you have any questions about this matter or should you like to discuss it further, please contact TPB Staff Director Kanti Srikanth at ksrikanth@mwkog.org or (202) 962-3257.

Sincerely,

Timothy Lovain
TPB Chairman and Alexandria City Council Member

Representative Don Beyer
October 11, 2016

Attachments (3)

- TPB letter to USDOT (8/26/16)
- MDOT letter to USDOT (8/26/16)
- VDOT letter to USDOT (8/26/16)

cc: The Honorable Benjamin Cardin, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Tim Kaine, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mark Warner, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Barbara Comstock, U. S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Gerald Connolly, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable John Delaney, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Donna F. Edwards, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Andy Harris, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Scott Rigell, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Christopher J. Van Hollen, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Robert J. Wittman, U.S. House of Representatives



**National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board**

August 26, 2016

The Honorable Gregory G. Nadeau
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Carolyn Flowers
Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Comments on Proposed Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform Rule [Docket No. FHWA-2016-0016]

Dear Administrator Nadeau and Acting Administrator Flowers:

I write to you on behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to offer our comments on the recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform." The TPB is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington metropolitan area.

While the TPB strongly supports the stated intent of the NPRM, we have significant concerns about the practicality of the proposed changes and the negative consequences those changes would have on metropolitan transportation planning and decisionmaking. We respectfully request that you withdraw the NPRM and work with individual MPOs and States to remedy specific instances in which a lack of coordination might be hindering the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Below are our chief concerns and the reasons why we urge that this NPRM be withdrawn:

- **Replacing the existing consultative process of defining Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundaries with a "one-size-fits-all" approach would ignore local needs and processes.**

The NPRM proposes that Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs) encompass entire Urbanized Areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years. This one-size-fits-all approach would replace the existing process for defining boundaries in which States and MPOs engage in a consultative, cooperative process that take into account a variety of important factors, including population densities, local transportation needs, transportation and land-use interactions, and existing legislative and administrative processes.

These long-standing approaches have, in our view, enabled a more effective and productive planning process that more fully satisfies the statutory “3-C” requirement—for a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process.

A number of other practical concerns about this one-size-fits-all approach impel us to call for the withdrawal of this NPRM:

- The U.S. Census Bureau's process for defining Urbanized Area boundaries is not well understood and does not appear to consider transportation systems or mobility needs.
- Urbanized Area boundaries do not align with the boundaries of local government jurisdictions, which bear the greatest responsibility for early planning and programming of transportation projects.
- The boundaries of Census tracts, the basic unit of land area used by the Census Bureau to identify Urbanized Areas, do not align with the boundaries of Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs), the basic unit of land area used by MPOs to define the boundaries of the MPA and to conduct transportation analyses.
- No recognized agency or entity currently exists to forecast future population and population densities to determine the future extent or congruity of Urbanized Areas. With no such system or process in place, reaching agreement on the boundaries of an MPA would be challenging and would add unnecessary complexity to the planning process.
- Conducting air quality conformity analysis for MPAs that span multiple existing metropolitan areas that are in various stages of meeting federal air quality standards would be extremely difficult. (See next section for more.)

TPB Recommendation: States and MPOs should retain the full authority and flexibility to define MPA and MPO boundaries in a manner that considers the transportation needs and administrative and decisionmaking processes within the Metropolitan Planning Area.

- **Conducting metropolitan planning over more expansive areas would lead to less efficient and less effective planning and decisionmaking.**

The NPRM's proposal that MPAs encompass entire Urbanized Areas and any contiguous areas expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years would lead to the creation of extremely large MPAs. The NPRM does provide for an exemption in which excessively large MPAs could have multiple MPOs, but it would still require those MPOs to jointly develop a single metropolitan transportation plan (Plan) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), to agree to a process for making a single air quality conformity determination, and to jointly establish performance targets to address new federal Performance-Based Planning and Programming requirements.

The TPB considers this to be the most onerous and impracticable change to the metropolitan planning process. Even under the current process of defining MPO boundaries and MPAs, many MPOs cover vast areas encompassing dozens of counties and cities, multiple states, and other regional entities and authorities. The TPB's planning area already spans three state-level jurisdictions, encompasses 21 counties and cities, covers 3,500 square miles,

and is home to more than 5 million people. Under the proposed rule, that area would grow to cover 11,200 square miles, spanning six state-level jurisdictions from Virginia to New Jersey, with a population of more than 15 million people (see Figure 1 on p. 5). The mobility needs, local transportation and land use planning policies and priorities, and the availability and appropriateness of different travel modes would vary immensely across a region of this size.

Thus, the NPRM would make an already challenging task totally impracticable in the following ways:

- The vast diversity of needs and dispersed planning and decisionmaking processes would make it nearly impossible to develop a coherent and unifying set of priorities, goals, and objectives to guide the development of a Plan.
- Differences in the budgetary cycles and funding obligation procedures among different jurisdictions would make the process of developing and amending a joint TIP onerous and time-consuming and could delay or stop critical investments in transportation infrastructure improvements.
- The expansiveness of the planning area and the diversity of needs and people it encompasses would make it challenging to gather public input and to use it in a meaningful way when developing the Plan, TIP, and other products.
- Conducting air quality conformity analysis for such a large area with multiple MPOs, each of which may be in different levels of non-attainment or maintenance status for different criteria pollutants with different target years for analysis and different levels of motor vehicle emissions budgets, would be overwhelming and impracticable.

TPB Recommendation: MPOs should continue to develop a Plan and TIP and make air quality conformity determinations for their respective planning areas as they currently exist.

- **Coordination between adjacent or affected MPOs is already occurring. Existing planning rules and practices do not preclude further efforts to strengthen such coordination.**

The NPRM suggests that having multiple MPOs in a given MPA is inefficient and that better coordination among those MPOs and with adjacent MPOs is needed.

The TPB believes that the MPO boundaries and MPAs in the National Capital Region and its vicinity that have existed over the past several decades have served the larger Urbanized Area and the States well. The TPB is not aware of any documented examples of existing boundary-setting practices that have systematically hindered metropolitan planning.

The TPB has coordinated effectively with adjacent MPOs on many occasions and at different levels. Here are a few examples:

- **Planning analyses coordination:** The TPB works closely with the Baltimore MPO (BRTB) on a number of planning activities, including collecting household travel data, developing land use assumptions for use in travel demand forecasting, and implementing transportation demand management programs.

Mr. Nadeau and Ms. Flowers
August 26, 2016

- **Project-level coordination:** The TPB coordinated with the Fredericksburg Area MPO (FAMPO) in updating the Plan to include a multimodal Express Lanes project on I-95 that crossed the boundaries of both MPOs.
- **Cooperative agreement:** The TPB entered a cooperative agreement with FAMPO in 2004 to fulfill metropolitan planning responsibilities for a portion of Stafford County, Virginia, that was designated in the 2000 Census as contiguous to one of the Urbanized Areas within the TPB's planning area.
- **Coordination across multiple MPOs:** The TPB meets regularly with the MPOs in Baltimore (BRTB), Wilmington (WILMAPCO), and Philadelphia (DVRPC) as part of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Roundtable. The coordination effort has been cited as a best practice in the Federal Highway Administration's "Regional Models of Cooperation Case Studies."

We are confident that any inefficiencies in the current metropolitan planning practices perceived by USDOT can be addressed within existing planning rules or with a few additional targeted requirements developed in consultation with the MPOs and States. We believe that a study jointly undertaken by USDOT, the States, and MPOs to identify the issues to be resolved and examine the best way to address them in a context-sensitive manner would be most informative.

TPB Recommendation: USDOT should undertake a joint study with MPOs and the States to identify specific issues to be resolved and examine the best way to address these in a context-sensitive manner without drastic changes to existing processes and procedures.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on the proposed "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform" rule. Again, we respectfully request that you withdraw the NPRM and work with individual MPOs and States to remedy specific instances in which a lack of coordination might be hindering the metropolitan transportation planning process. The concerns raised here about the practicality of the proposed rule and its negative consequences on metropolitan transportation planning process make this a particularly important request.

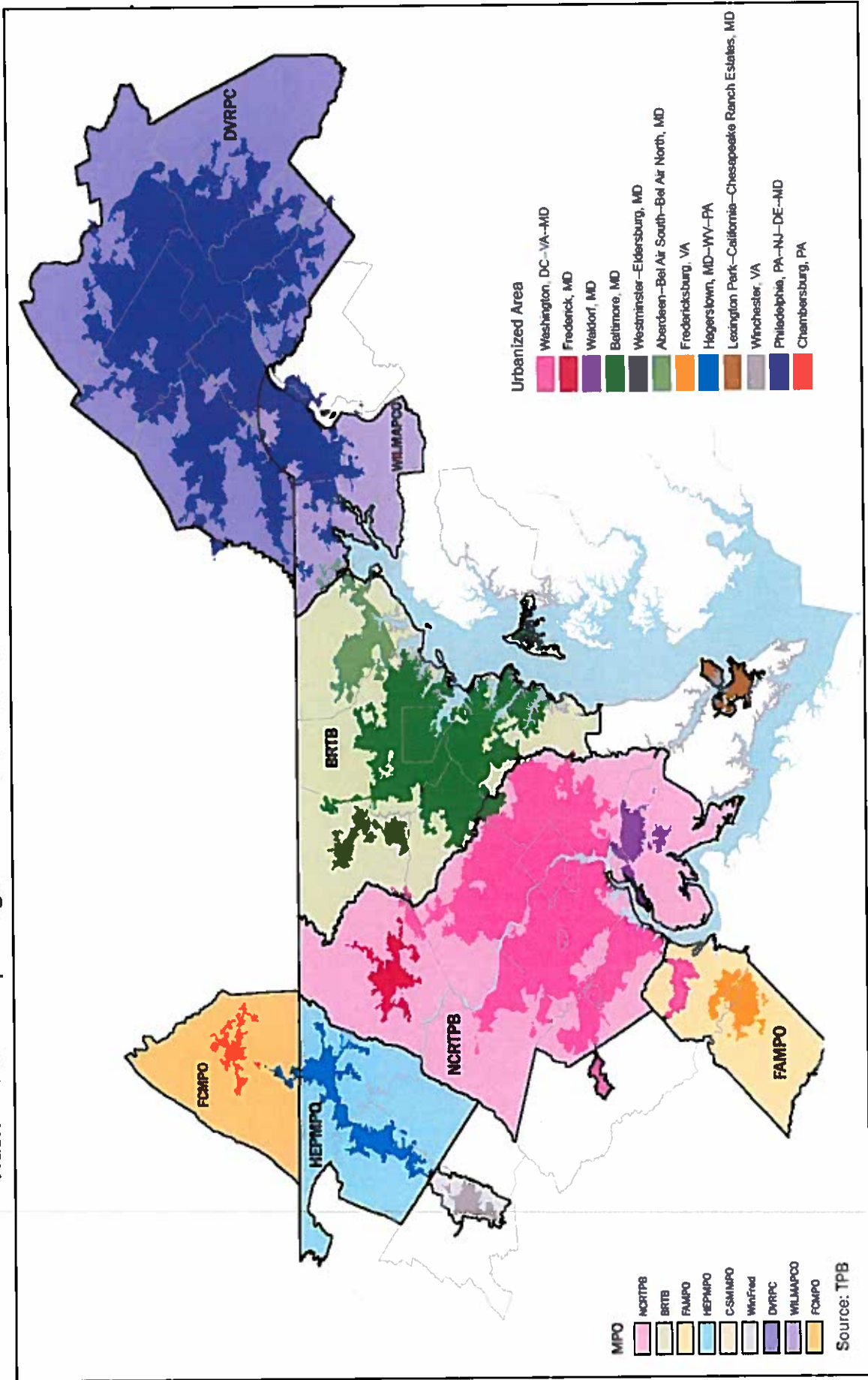
If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact TPB Staff Director Kanti Srikanth at ksrikanth@mwco.org or (202) 962-3257.

Sincerely,



Tim Lovain
TPB Chairman

FIGURE 1. National Capital Region - MPO and Urbanized Area Boundaries, 2010 Census (smoothed)





Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Pete K. Rahn
Secretary

August 26, 2016

Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

Ms. Carolyn Flowers
Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

Dear Administrator Nadeau and Acting Administrator Flowers:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is pleased to submit comments on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) "Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination and Planning Area Reform: Proposed Rule FHWA 2016-0016," published in the Federal Register on June 27, 2016.

The MDOT strongly opposes the proposed rule and respectfully requests that it be withdrawn for the reasons outlined in this letter. As a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), MDOT agrees with the docket comments provided by AASHTO with respect to the proposed rulemaking. The MDOT also concurs with the comments submitted by a number of the MPOs in Maryland, including those from the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), and Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMPACO).

It appears that the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) perceives that the transportation planning process, as it pertains to MPO coordination and boundaries, is not working. The MDOT's experience in this regard contradicts this perception. All seven MPOs in Maryland, five of which are multi-state MPOs, are already engaged in a planning process that fully includes and clearly defines the census-designated Urbanized Areas (UZAs) and Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs) through formal agreements. The proposed rule creates unnecessary complexity and adds no value to an already successful and comprehensive process in Maryland. It is unclear if implementing this rule would stand up to a legal challenge. In addition, implementing of this rule could create legal issues across state lines, particularly concerning fiscal constraint since the short-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) budgets must have both state legislature and gubernatorial approvals. The unintended consequences that could result from this proposed rule are far-reaching and more time should be dedicated to coordinating with the states and MPOs to determine the best way to address the perceived problems that USDOT has identified.

My telephone number is 410-865-1000
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY Users Call Via MD Relay
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau
Ms. Carolyn Flowers
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Maryland MPOs Already Engage in an Active Coordination Process

The proposed rule offers an overly generalized solution to the perceived problem of “a lack of coordination” that many states and MPOs, including Maryland, are not experiencing. The MDOT is already accomplishing the goals of regional coordination and cooperation between the MPOs and adjacent states, which share urbanized areas to satisfy current federal standards.

Maryland has seven MPOs, five of which are multi-state MPOs (see Attachment 1 for a description of Maryland MPOs and a corresponding map). Three of the five multi-state MPOs are Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) with populations exceeding 200,000. The MDOT maintains official agreements, which clearly identify where the MPA and UZAs overlap and which MPO is responsible for planning for each specific population. In addition, MDOT hosts a bi-annual meeting with all Maryland MPOs to engage staff and federal partners in improved coordination. Maryland MPO members often attend each other’s meetings throughout the year on various overlapping topics, such as maintaining the travel model and developing the cooperative forecast.

The planning processes in which Maryland participates have been successful in meeting federal regulations, as evidenced in the continued approvals of the TMA Certifications for TPB, BRTB, and WILMAPCO, which includes Maryland’s Cecil County. Another example of Maryland’s regional coordination process is that the BRTB contains not only the Baltimore UZA, but the Westminster and Aberdeen UZAs as well. Similarly, the TPB contains the primary Washington UZA, which stretches into Maryland (MD), Virginia (VA), and the District of Columbia (DC), as well as the Frederick and Waldorf UZAs. The Westminster, Aberdeen, Frederick, and Waldorf UZAs could have each designated their own separate MPOs, but in an effort to improve regional coordination, they chose to be included in the regional transportation planning body that would provide the greatest benefit to the region.

The MDOT actively engages MPO Board/Council members outside of the MPO process in many ways, one of which is through the annual Consolidated Transportation Program Tour. The Tour is a series of meetings held each Fall to coordinate transportation issues and review the proposed transportation budget with each of Maryland’s 24 primary local jurisdictions. This budget informs the development of the MPO TIPs and the Maryland Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The proposed rule offers no “value added” to MDOT’s existing and extensive coordination process.

Proposed Rule Creates Unnecessary Complexity

The current obstacles in coordination will multiply when they are applied to implementing this rule concerning funding coordination and developing one regional transportation plan, TIP, conformity determination, and set of performance targets. The largest issue is the complexity involved in implementing the rule as written. Even if MPOs choose not to merge or re-designate their boundaries, the referenced planning products would still be required to be identical and coordinated.

Each MPO has evolved to meet the needs of the region it currently serves. There is flexibility in MPO structure, which has allowed vastly different regions to designate and form these organizations to best suit their areas. The individual MPO Board/Council structures will determine the effectiveness of this new rule, should it become final. At best, implementing this rule will be challenging to explain to the Board/Council members who must individually vote to implement these changes.

Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau
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Local elected officials who serve on MPO Boards/Councils *are not transportation specialists*. Maryland MPO Board/Council members spend as few as ten hours to as many as 30 to 50 hours *per year* on transportation planning issues, which is a very small amount of time considering the amount of time spent by staff to prepare documents and plans for boards to approve. This rule suggests and assumes that board members are willing to spend additional time on actions that may be implemented hundreds of miles away from the citizens that they represent. When an MPA or MPO grows to be too large in size, issues that are important to the State and local elected officials can get diluted across large geographic areas, further complicating an already complex process and making it impossible to think regionally but act locally.

Should this rule become final, merging MPOs would be a time-consuming, complex, and costly process, even if voluntary. The forced creation of a planning process to develop unified planning products would also be difficult, particularly so for Maryland's five multi-state MPOs, and redesignation or merging would require the agreement of as many as four governors and the Mayor of the District of Columbia to proceed.

The potential merging of MPOs will also marginalize the smaller local jurisdictions and smaller states associated with multi-state MPOs, thereby creating the potential for critical infrastructure improvements to be hindered by inter-state bureaucracy via the MPO approval process. This could result in potentially significant delays and additional costs to the delivery of safety and system preservation projects.

In addition, the states bordering Maryland are not all on the same legislative or budgetary schedule. The project ranking and funding mechanisms are also different. *Joint planning products that require five states, their governors, their legislatures, and state agencies coordinating on the same schedule would be virtually impossible to implement*. The number of TIP and STIP amendments and modifications that would need to be processed would dramatically increase, creating more work for states, MPOs, and our federal partners than had the MPOs remained separate. Delays in funding and project delivery will inevitably occur as a result.

There appear to be many inconsistencies between the stated goals in USDOT's explanatory paragraph of the NPRM's purpose and the manner in which it has been presented to stakeholders. While many of these goals appear to be non-controversial on the surface, the likelihood of complications and added layers of bureaucracy seem to be in conflict with wanting to "give MPOs a stronger voice in the regional planning process" and "improve regional coordination." If the U.S. Census becomes the primary mechanism for establishing MPO boundaries, regardless of current governmental structure, that means decision-making authority would be taken away from local jurisdictions, the states, and their governors by not allowing them to establish their MPO boundaries. This undermines a state's ability to determine how the metropolitan planning process will be coordinated. It also dilutes local jurisdictional influence in the MPOs as their stature diminishes and the states become larger forces on the MPOs. In multi-state MPOs, the majority of the coordination tends to happen between the states not the local jurisdictions.

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This rule implies that it is a simple or brief process to adjust the MPA to match the UZA. When UZAs do not align with state or local governmental authority, the result is confusion and a lack of ownership over regional authority. For example, MDOT was unable to meet the federal deadline to designate the Calvert-St. Mary's MPO, the most recent MPO established in Maryland, due to the fact that there were no clearly defined local elected officials that represented the small UZA (population 58,875). It took several years of intensive coordination to fully establish this small MPO.

Regardless of size or complexity, this new rule would affect 142 out of the 409 MPOs nationally, and it lacks a practical approach to implementing the required changes of either merging, redrawing boundaries, or coordinating combined planning products over large and diverse areas so soon before the next census is taken.

The proposed rule does not address how the census determines UZAs or a way that states could challenge or alter UZAs. States should have the authority to be able to adjust UZA boundaries, question the logic that develops the UZA boundaries, and establish reasonable MPOs.

The proposed rule acknowledges that there will be an initial expense in the merging of MPOs, but suggest that there could be long-term savings. While this may be true for single state MPOs, the additional travel and time requirements for newly formed and additions to existing multi-state MPOs will be an additional expense for the local board members. Although the time spent is reimbursable, the time that is taken away from their other priorities is a cost that has not been calculated.

Potential Legal Concerns

The potential for legal challenges and inter-state conflicts arising from the proposed rule could place jurisdictions in conflict with existing and superseding statutes. To the extent the proposed rule would force redesignations in some instances without local concurrence, the regulation would violate 23 USC §134 (d) (4) and (5), the MPO designation and redesignation clauses under which MPO designations remain in effect until a redesignation occurs. Redesignation requires the agreement between the governor and local governments that together represent at least 75 percent of the existing planning area population. The proposed rule is in conflict with the language of the existing statute.

Neither the statutory language nor the regulatory interpretation has changed in over 20 years. The statutory authorization for this new interpretation does not appear in the Fixing America's Service Transportation (FAST) Act. The USDOT should have sought Congressional approval through legislation to enact the aforementioned goals.

The methodology and metrics used to assess urbanized areas and planning area boundaries changed drastically between the 2000 census and 2010 census. Without knowing the measures and procedures that will be adopted for developing the 2020 census, it would be sheer guesswork to predict "the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period" with any degree of accuracy.

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Inter-state conflicts could also arise if multiple MPOs in Maryland must have a single metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), TIP, conformity determination, and set of performance targets. Since the set of contiguous urbanized areas in the northeastern United States runs from the District of Columbia area to Massachusetts, the cascading effect of coordination requirements is a daunting proposition. While this approach might make sense for smaller MPAs, it is counter-productive when applied to multi-city mega-regions like the northeastern United States and California.

Unintended Consequences and Suggested Changes to the NPRM

The MDOT is concerned that insufficient time has been allotted to evaluating the consequences of the proposed rule. The rule could have many unintended consequences that could negatively affect the regional planning process and detract from the locally-developed and unique approaches that each region has created and refined over many years in conducting regional planning and coordination activities. MPOs traditionally have different rules based on their size and while consolidation by some MPOs might achieve the desired results for the USDOT, there are definitely unintended consequences that will hurt MPOs, local jurisdictions, and smaller states if this rule is implemented as written. One size does not fit all.

The MDOT's general concerns and suggestions for improving the NPRM are as follows:

- The proposed rule does not acknowledge any jurisdiction below the state level. States are made up of counties, cities, and towns. The census looks at block groups, or census tracts, and does not take the smaller jurisdictions' boundaries into consideration. The MPAs/UZAs break smaller state jurisdictions in two and may place them in separate UZAs. In general, governors might not be opposed to the consolidation of smaller MPOs within an individual state but it should be on a voluntary and cooperative basis. Local jurisdictions, on the other hand, would generally be opposed to it as larger MPOs may make local jurisdictions much smaller players. This goes against the original intent of the establishment of MPOs, which is to give local jurisdictions a voice in regional planning and a platform to voice their concerns and priorities.
- Shared boundaries between two UZAs should not be a determining test of contiguousness. Two adjacent urbanized areas should remain two different MPOs. The Washington and Baltimore UZAs share a border at the City of Laurel. These two UZAs have different characteristics and needs and should remain as separate UZAs and MPOs.

If USDOT proceeds to finalize the proposed rule despite widespread opposition, MDOT respectfully offers the following suggestions:

- The proposed rule should be a voluntary request that a state's governor would consider.
- The proposed consolidations should not create MPO mega-regions where already large MPOs (over 1,000,000 in population) are forced to merge. In place of a combined regional transportation plan, TIP, performance targets, and funding consolidation, adjacent regions could develop one over-arching policy document that all MPOs in the mega-region could agree to follow.

- There should be an exemption from the requirements of the proposed rule if the amount of population contained in a UZA that overlaps into a different MPA is less than ten percent of the total population in an MPO.
- Traditionally, MDOT staff has “smoothed” census-designated UZA boundaries to create FHWA-approved adjusted UZAs, taking into account future growth areas. The MDOT suggest that the ability to continue to “smooth” UZAs be retained so that they may continue to follow jurisdictional boundaries.
- The primary issue behind the proposed rule appears to be the existence of multiple MPOs within one MPA, whether wholly within a state or crossing state lines. The following are several examples of how complicated this process could become in Maryland if implemented:
 1. The Philadelphia MPA extends into portions of Cecil County, Maryland, which is under the planning auspices of WILMAPCO. Under the proposed rule, the governors of the respective states in the Philadelphia MPA would be required to designate multiple MPOs within the single MPA, maintaining the existing MPOs. Regardless of individual MPOs continuing to exist, however, they would now be required to jointly produce a single MTP and a single TIP. In effect, this would place MDOT projects in portions of Cecil County within a Philadelphia TIP. How exactly this would work is yet to be determined. The proposed rule says “the MPOs would be required to establish procedures for joint decision-making.” Whether the existing MPOs would still be free to amend their portions of the MTP and TIP or whether a joint-MPO committee would need to approve amendments is unclear. Conversely, the governors could conceivably consolidate the existing MPOs so that only one MPO served the Philadelphia MPA. The MDOT supports keeping the current structure intact, since it works well and WILMAPCO is a highly functioning MPO.
 2. The Aberdeen-Bel Air South-Bel Air North MPA is another example of multiple MPOs existing within one MPA. This MPA extends across the Susquehanna River, covering Aberdeen and Bel Air in Harford County and Port Deposit and Perryville in Cecil County. The proposed rulemaking would ideally see the entire MPA under one MPO. Currently, the Cecil County portion of this MPA is served by WILMAPCO through an agreement. As with the above example, were the two MPOs to remain in place, BRTB and WILMAPCO now would be required to jointly produce a single MTP and single TIP for the Aberdeen MPA, whether in conjunction with the Philadelphia and/or Baltimore MPAs or as an individual Aberdeen MPA.
 3. Further to the south, the BRTB (Baltimore) shares populations with TPB (Washington), which also shares populations with the Fredericksburg (VA) Area MPO (FAMPO). This could then in turn mean that there would be one MTP, TIP, etc., from Fredericksburg, VA all the way to Philadelphia, PA. This is simply not an implementable framework or structure.

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Ms. Carolyn Flowers
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- If, as the proposed rule states, “when there are multiple MPOs within the same MPA, enhanced coordination and joint decision-making procedures are needed to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive planning process within the MPA,” what is the advantage of designating multiple MPOs within an MPA? While the intent may be a more “local” level of governance, the reality is that it adds is another layer of bureaucracy.
- It will be crucial to determine if all MPOs will need to be redesignated following any changes to their geography based upon the proposed rule. Who would make that final determination?
- The proposed rule states the new regulations will “ensure States and MPOs employ consistent data, assumptions, and analytical materials when doing transportation planning.” It is unclear the effect such regulations might have on performance measures/targets with respect to state DOTs and MPOs.
- The proposed rule includes a two-year phase-in period from the time of the final rule’s publication. The MDOT proposes pushing this timeline back to coincide with the next decennial census and subsequent MPA designations.
- States needs to be given the opportunity to coordinate with the U.S. Census Bureau in designating UZA boundaries to consider more factors than covered by the census and adjust boundaries to correspond to political, geographic, and demographic realities. The census is not a transportation-determining authority and should not have the authority to dictate how transportation planning is coordinated. The information and data provided by the census is used as an important tool to inform the process, stakeholders, and jurisdictions involved. It should not be the sole determining factor in establishing MPAs, UZAs, and MPOs.

In closing, USDOT has stated that the purpose of this rule is to improve the planning process, strengthen coordination, promote increased regional approaches to decision-making, elevate the importance of regionalism, ensure that investments reflect the needs of the entire region, recognize the critical role of MPOs, and strengthen the voice of MPOs. The MDOT has demonstrated that all of those important activities are already occurring.

Furthermore, as indicated in the MDOT Statewide Planning Findings and in the TPB, BRTB, and WILMAPCO TMA Certifications that have been approved by USDOT, Maryland’s planning processes have been successful in meeting federal regulations. MDOT fails to see how the proposed rule will add value to an already comprehensive, well-documented, and inclusive process.

The MDOT appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and respectfully suggests that there are other methods to address the perceived issues that USDOT has identified as hindering the regional transportation planning process, other than through the proposed rulemaking.

Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau
Ms. Carolyn Flowers
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If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Heather Murphy, MDOT Office of Planning and Capital Programming Director, at 410-865-1275, toll free at 1-888-713-1414, or via email at hmurphy@mdot.state.md.us. Ms. Murphy will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Pete K. Rahn
Secretary

Attachment

cc: Ms. Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT

Attachment 1

The following background information has been provided to offer insight into Maryland's complex planning environment, specifically related to overlapping urbanized areas, existing MPO and MPA boundaries, and regional and inter-state coordination.

Existing Maryland MPOs and their total UZA population:

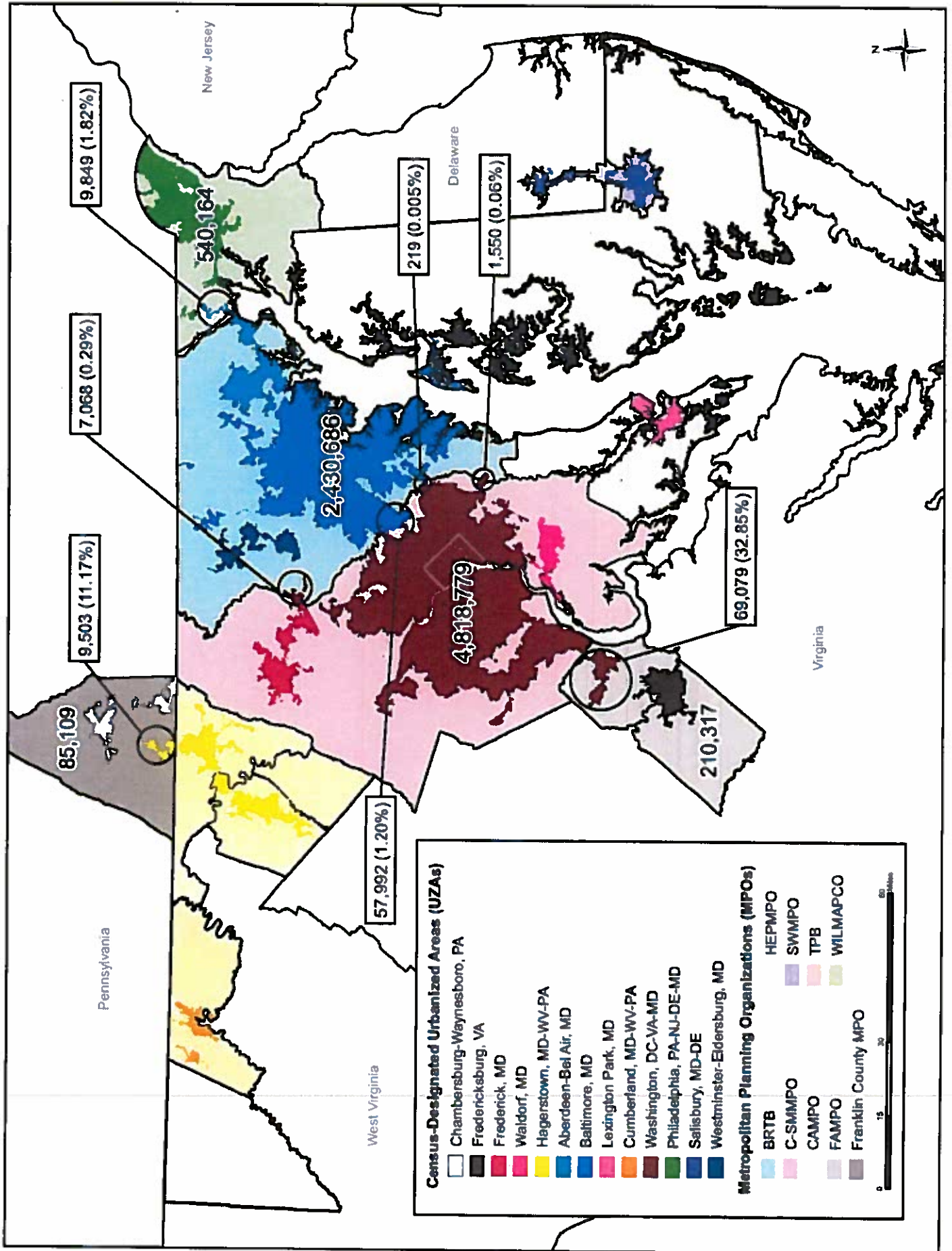
- Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), population 2,430,686
 - Cumberland Area MPO (CAMPO)*, population 49,619
 - Calvert-St. Mary's MPO (C-SMMPO), population 58,875
 - Hagerstown-Eastern Panhandle MPO (HEPMPO)*, population 173,193
 - National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)*, population 4,818,779
 - Salisbury/Wicomico Area MPO (S/WMPO)*, population 98,081
 - Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)*, population 540,164
- * MPOs whose boundaries extend into adjacent states (PA, DE, VA, WV, and DC)

Existing Maryland-adjusted UZAs/MPAs include:

- **Aberdeen-Bel Air South-Bel Air North**, MD (Harford County portion of MPA under agreement with BRTB; Cecil County portion of MPA under agreement with WILMAPCO)
- **Baltimore****, MD (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, and Queen Anne's County portions of MPA and Baltimore City under agreement with BRTB; Montgomery and Prince George's County portions of MPA under agreement with TPB)
- **Cumberland**, MD-WV-PA (MPA under agreement with CAMPO)
- **Frederick**, MD (MPA under agreement with TPB)
- **Hagerstown**, MD-WV-PA (MPA under agreement with HEPMPO)
- **Lexington Park-California-Chesapeake Ranch Estates**, MD (MPA under agreement with C-SMMPO)
- **Philadelphia****, PA-NJ-DE-MD (Cecil County portion of MPA under agreement with WILMAPCO)
- **Salisbury**, MD-DE (MPA under agreement with S/WMPO)
- **Waldorf**, MD (MPA under agreement with TPB)
- **Washington****, DC-VA-MD (Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's County portions of MPA under agreement with TPB; Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Howard County portions of MPA under agreement with BRTB)
- **Westminster-Eldersburg**, MD (MPA under agreement with BRTB)

** A TMA by virtue of 200,000+ population

Maryland MPOs and Urbanized Areas (2010 Census)





COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219 2000

Charles A. Kilpatrick, P.E.
Commissioner

August 26, 2016

Gregory G. Nadeau
Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Carolyn Flowers
Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking; Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform
Docket No. FHWA-2016-0016; FHWA RIN 2125-AF68; FTA RIN 2132-AB28

Dear Administrator Nadeau and Acting Administrator Flowers:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) jointly offer the following comments in response to the Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration/Department of Transportation June 27, 2016 Federal Register Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Request for Comments: Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination and Planning Area Reform.

General Overview/Response

As noted in the Summary section of the NPRM, this regulatory “action proposes to improve the transportation planning process by strengthening the coordination of MPOs and States and promoting the use of regional approaches to planning and decisionmaking. The proposed rule would emphasize the importance of applying a regional perspective during the planning process, to ensure that transportation investments reflect the needs and priorities of an entire region. Recognizing the critical role MPOs play in providing for the well-being of a region, this proposed rule would strengthen the voice of MPOs in the transportation planning process.”

While the stated purpose of the NPRM is laudable, due to the significant number of other related regulatory changes and the complexity of the potential implementation of the proposed rule, VDOT and DRPT request that the rulemaking be either withdrawn or postponed, and a working group established to study the issue.

VDOT and DRPT would note that the impacts of the regulatory changes proposed by this rulemaking are extremely difficult to assess, in light of the recent Statewide, Nonmetropolitan, and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule recently issued on May 27, 2016, as well as the several federal transportation performance management-related rulemakings that are in various stages of promulgation.

VDOT and DRPT are concerned about unintended consequences given state agency responsibility for the implementation and reporting requirements associated with the various new planning and performance related rulemakings and the interplay between the functions of MPOs and state agencies in complying with various aspects of the proposed rules. Most notably, unintended consequences could include significant delays in project delivery, increased project costs, and delayed or hindered implementation of the new rules.

VDOT and DRPT would, notwithstanding the recent rulemakings, also highlight one scenario to illustrate the proposed rule’s impact on current day planning processes and project delivery in Virginia. Based on our interpretation, the proposed rule would result either in establishment of a mega MPO from Caroline County in Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (and potentially beyond Philadelphia), or at least would require single consolidated planning documents and conformity determinations for the multiple MPOs contained within that area. Creating collaborative documents for the multiple MPOs or consolidation of the MPOs as a mega MPO will add significant time, logistical challenges, complexities, effort and cost to the project development process. A significant hurdle would be to simply educate expanded or multiple MPO boards, stakeholders and the public on potentially unfamiliar projects that are outside of their normal planning areas, and on the newly created coordination process to secure approvals for said projects in plans and programs.

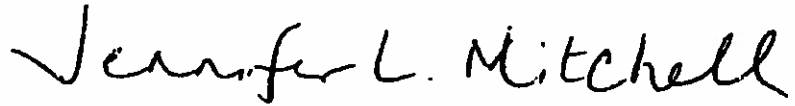
As stated above, given the complexities involved with assessing the impact of the proposed changes under this NPRM, VDOT and DRPT would propose that FHWA, FTA and USDOT withdraw or postpone this rulemaking and instead establish a working group or a similar body to study the potential issues and the objectives that may have prompted the proposed changes to current-day regulations under this NPRM.

In closing, VDOT and DRPT appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this proposed rule. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact either of us at the email addresses or telephone numbers below.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Kilpatrick, P.E.
Commissioner of Highways
Virginia Department of Transportation
Charlie.Kilpatrick@vdot.virginia.gov
804-786-2701



Jennifer Mitchell
Director
Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Jennifer.Mitchell@drpt.virginia.gov
804-371-4866



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

October 12, 2016

Dear FHWA EAR Program Director and Reviewers,

I am writing to express the support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB's) Commuter Connections Program at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for the proposal, led by Dr. Lei Zhang of the National Transportation Center (NTC) at the University of Maryland (UMD), entitled "Behavioral Science and Experimental Economics Approaches for Augmenting Predictive Models for Managed-Lanes Operations."

The TPB is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington metropolitan area, including the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. The TPB is involved in a wide spectrum of transportation planning, programming, and travel monitoring activities. The TPB's Commuter Connections program is a regional network of transportation organizations focused on helping commuters find other ways to get to work besides driving alone. One way the program does that is by providing commuters with information on commute options available to them, including ridesharing and High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and High-Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes.

Our region has a variety of managed-lane facilities already in use or planned in the near future, including HOV/HOT lanes on I-66, Express Toll Lanes on I-495, and HOV lanes on US-50, I-395, and I-270. Tens of thousands of area commuters are also registered in the regional ridematching database maintained by Commuter Connections. How to optimally utilize the region's managed-lane facilities and how to effectively encourage travelers to carpool or vanpool remain as major topics of interest to Commuter Connections. The program team continues to explore effective ways to incentivize the use of managed lanes in our region.

We are pleased that FHWA is supporting efforts that could lead to innovative solutions and advances for travel behavioral research of managed lane usage and operations. The UMD NTC proposal team consists of experts on travel behavior and data analytics, experimental economics, and behavioral sciences and communications. The proposed behavioral research could help agencies enhance managed lane planning, existing ridesharing programs, and other traveler incentive programs. Commuter Connections and the NTC have an existing partnership for continuous collaboration on traveler incentive research, incentive structure design, behavior response prediction, and end-user smartphone app development.

Given the importance of understanding travel behavior and the role of behavior incentives for the TPB's Commuter Connections program, we strongly support the NTC research proposal. We request your favorable consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy Lovain".

Timothy Lovain
TPB Chairman



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director
SUBJECT: Announcements and Updates
DATE: October 13, 2016

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



CHAMPIONING TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

A conference for TPB board members and other regional officials to examine where we are now and where we can go.

LUZ LAZO/TWITTER

JOIN US FOR THIS IMPORTANT EVENT

Hear local and national experts share their success stories, ongoing challenges, and opportunities. And be part of the conversation about how area leaders can work together to foster enhancements in our region.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2016 | 9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

Ronald F. Kirby Training Center, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

MORE DETAILS TO COME



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

mwcog.org/events