
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

March 15, 2023

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *IN-PERSON*

Mark Rawlings - DDOT
Jessica Fitzwater – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
Brian Lee – Laurel
Oluseyi Olugbenie – Prince George’s County Executive
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Cindy Dyballa – Takoma Park
Shana Fulcher– Takoma Park
Heather Murphy - MDOT
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Tom Ross – City of Fairfax
Ann B. Wheeler – Prince William County
Bill Cuttler – VDOT
Allison Davis – WMATA

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *VIRTUALLY*

Reuben Collins, TPB Chair – Charles County
Charles Allen – DC Council
Christina Henderson – DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Anna Chamberlin – DDOT
Dan Emerine – DC Office of Planning
Mati Bzurto - Bowie
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg
Emmett V. Jordan - Greenbelt
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Eric Olson – Prince George’s County
Takis Karantonis – Arlington County
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Adam Shellenberger – Fauquier County
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Paolo Belita – Prince William County
David Marsden – Virginia Senate
Sandra Jackson – FHWA
Tammy Stidham – NPS

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Clark Mercer
Andrew Meese
Tim Canan
Nick Ramfos
Paul DesJardin
Leo Pineda
Andrew Austin
John Swanson
Sergio Ritacco
Tim Canan
Marcela Moreno
Rachel Beyerle
Mark Moran
Nick Ramfos
Tim Canan
Jeff King
Rachael Beyerle
Jamie Bufkin
Kim Sutton
Deborah Etheridge
Justine Gonzalez-Velez
Joy Schaefer – Frederick County
Bob Brown – Loudoun County
Kari Snyder – MDOT
Regina Moore – VDOT
Richard A. Wallace - CAC Chair
Bill Pugh – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Monica Backmon – Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Jason Stanford – Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
Bill Orleans – public

1. PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Chair Reuben Collins called the meeting to order. He said the meeting was being conducted in a hybrid format with both virtual and in-person attendees. He described the procedures for conducting the meeting.

Lyn Erickson conducted a roll call. Attendance for the meeting can be found on the first page of the minutes. She confirmed there was a quorum.

Jason Stanford, president of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, provided in-person comments regarding greenhouse gas emissions and the zero based budget approach. A copy of his remarks were submitted for the record.

Lyn Erickson said the TPB received seven comments via email and seven comments from the Visualize 2050 project list feedback form. She said a memo with a summary of the written comments as well as the entire comments could be found on the TPB meeting page. She noted that the comments included correspondence from Kacy Kostiuik, a former TPB member regarding the Technical Inputs Solicitation; Tad

Aburn, a former Maryland Department of the Environment representative on COG's Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, regarding climate change goals; Arlene Montemarano regarding Maryland's express lanes projects; and Bill Pugh, a senior policy fellow of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, who called for transparency and public feedback in the Visualize 2050 development.

2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 15, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes were approved with three abstentions from Dan Emerine, Tom Ross, and Emmett Jordan.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Mark Rawlings said the Technical Committee met on March 3. He said the committee was briefed on two items on the TPB agenda – The FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program and The FY 2024 Commuter Connections Work Program. Informational items included: WMATA Better Bus Study; Visualize 2050; research on MPO household travel surveys, Changes to bike and pedestrian volumes during and after the pandemic, military installation resilience in the National Capital Region (focus on transportation elements); and the Federal Certification Review of the TPB.

Kanti Srikanth announced that Chair Collins was having technical difficulties joining the meeting, so Vice Chair Walkinshaw assumed chairmanship of the meeting.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT AND ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Richard Wallace, 2023 chair of the CAC, gave the committee's report. He said the CAC met on March 9. He said the first half of the meeting was conducted as a focus group led by the federal agency staff conducting the Federal Certification Review of the TPB. This discussion focused on two key questions: How effective is public involvement in transportation planning conducted by the TPB? What methods are working well, and which are not? He said the committee was engaged in a very robust discussion. He said the second half of the meeting focused on the development of Visualize 2050.

Christina Henderson, who is vice chair of the TPB as well as chair of the AFA Advisory Committee, gave a report on the AFA meeting on February 27. Referring to the posted material, she said the committee discussed the Visualize 2050 kickoff, the results of the Visualize 2045 environmental justice analysis, and the update to the coordinated human service transportation plan.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on March 3 and approved four amendments to the FY 2023-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The first amendment added approximately \$5 million at the request of DDOT for safety improvement projects citywide. The second amendment, at the request of TPB staff for the Commuter Connections program, added funding for a recently awarded grant from the Federal Transit Administration to pilot test a program to use under-utilized vanpools vehicles as on-demand transit for those people who do not have transit service available, particularly within the Equity Emphasis Areas. The third amendment, at the request of VDOT, adds approximately \$55.5 million for projects including VRE rolling stock acquisition, PRTC's commuter assistance program, as well as an interchange project. The fourth TIP amendment, at the request of the Eastern Federal Lands Division of FHWA, was for projects throughout the region.

Kanti Srikanth reviewed letters sent and received. He said the packet included letters of support from the TPB for jurisdictions seeking federal assistance, including Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, and Alexandria. He said the packet also included a letter from the TPB to the Mayor of D.C. and the governors of Maryland and Virginia urging action to address the unacceptable levels of fatalities on the regional roadways.

Kanti Srikanth said the packet also include information on the forthcoming grant solicitation from MDOT for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program. He said the packet also included a notice to board members that TPB staff will soon begin conducting a regional air passenger survey.

Calling attention to items not in the packet, Kanti Srikanth said the annual Street Smart will be running from April 17 through May 14. Finally, he noted that TPB staff had recently participated in a two-day Federal Certification Review of the TPB's planning process. Federal law requires this review every four years. He said there was a lot of recognition of the TPB's work, and he called attention in particular to the board's efforts on climate change.

Kanti Srikanth gave an update on the process for developing the new long-range transportation plan, Visualize 2050. He said the plan is scheduled for approval in December of 2024. As part of the plan development process, he said that all 23 transportation agencies in the region have been asked to submit revised revenue estimates for projects between now and 2050. He said these agencies have also been asked to reexamine each of their projects in current long-range plan to identify how these projects will advance the TPB's approved goals and also to ensure the anticipated project costs will be covered by funding that is expected to be available. He said this information from the transportation agencies would be due by the end of this June so that staff can begin a nine-month analysis.

Kanti Srikanth said that member agency staff have been hard at work on developing the updates and despite these best efforts of the agencies, he recognizes that the June deadline is very optimistic. He also noted the considerable public comment that has already been received about the plan development. He said that based on his conversations with senior staff at the agencies, two of the largest projects – the Maryland Op Lanes project on I-270 and the Beltway and the WMATA funding shortfall – will find it particularly difficult to finalize updates by June deadline. He said both projects have substantive issues to resolve which will need additional time. He noted that the re-examination of the Op Lanes project was just beginning with the senior leadership of the administration of the new Maryland governor and the recent development of the private sector partner withdrawing from the public-private project, has added new considerations to the decision making. As such MDOT has opined that additional time would help with the review and decision making. Regarding the WMATA project, he said that WMATA is facing an operating deficit of approximately \$750 million per year and a budget resolution has not yet been achieved. WMATA senior staff has indicated that they will be seeking a regional discussion on the matter and these discussions would extend beyond June 2023. Considering these challenges, he said staff would be recommending the TPB adjust the schedule to allow more time for the long-range plan development. He also said that since the federally mandated update of the long range plan is not due until sometime in 2026, providing additional time for the current update will not pose any issue with federal compliance. He said that staff will bring a revised schedule for the board's consideration and adoption during the April meeting.

Brian Lee asked if a report from the Federal Certification Review would be provided to the board.

Kanti Srikanth said yes, the TPB would receive a detailed report. He provided further detail on the review, noting the federal agencies were tasked with ensuring the federally required process was being followed and federally required products were being developed. He said the TPB has frequently gone above and beyond these federal requirements, citing the development of the Aspirational Initiatives as an example. He said he hoped the certification review report would highlight and commend some of these extra efforts.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Collins reminded the board that at the beginning of the year he spoke about the importance of this period of time for long-range transportation planning in the region. He said the long-range planning process was grounded in a reexamination of the region's previous plan for transportation investments. The new plan would be intended to respond to emerging travel patterns, identify the best uses for new federal funding, and incorporate perspectives from the new administrations in both Virginia and Maryland. He said he would support proposals to extend the development period for the new long-range plan.

Chair Collins said the process would be very transparent and he looked forward to hearing his colleagues' opinions on this matter. He said the potential extension was not on the March agenda, but it would be a follow-up agenda matter at the April meeting. He said that from a personal perspective, a time extension would provide more opportunity to discuss the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, which he said was the most important project in southern Maryland.

7. AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM, FY 2023 CARRYOVER FUNDING TO FY 2024, AND APPROVAL OF THE FY 2024 UPWP

Referring to the posted material, Lyn Erickson noted that she had briefed the board on the UPWP at the January and February TPB meetings. She said that under this item, the board would be asked to approve two resolutions. The first would carry over funding from the current UPWP to next year's UPWP. The second resolution would approve the Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2024. She said that once the UPWP is approved, staff would submit it to the federal agencies for federal approval, which is required.

David Snyder asked if there is funding in the UPWP for the TPB to help WMATA address Metro's looming funding shortfall.

Kanti Srikanth answered that there is no UPWP funding for the TPB to directly conduct financial analysis for Metro, and in fact, he said he understood that WMATA is currently engaged in such analysis. However, he said the TPB staff does have expertise in transit planning and travel demand forecasting which could be beneficial to regional efforts on examining options to address Metro's fiscal challenges. He further noted the current budget does provide for TPB staff to be available to assist Metro and TPB member agencies as needed in addressing Metro's financial needs. Additionally he said that the proposed TPB budget also provides some resources for staff to be engaged in follow-up analysis for WMATA's Better Bus study.

Based on Kanti Srikanth's comments, David Snyder said it was his understanding that although the UPWP did not directly include TPB staff activities on the Metro funding gap, staff would be available to participate in the regional conversation that needs to occur with regard to the future of Metro.

Kanti Srikanth said that was correct. He reiterated that TPB staff has not received any explicit requests, but there is staff capability and limited additional funding capacity for such work, as needed.

David Snyder said he believes the TPB should play an active role in addressing the Metro funding shortfall.

Cindy Dyballa asked for more explanation of the carryover action.

Lyn Erickson explained that some funds from the current UPWP, which ends in June, will not be expended in the current fiscal year. To carry over that funding, two actions are required: The funds must first be pulled from the 2023 UPWP and then, secondly, they are put into the FY 2024 UPWP.

Takis Karantonis moved approval of Resolution R7-2023 to amend the budget and work activities for

FY 2023. The motion was seconded by Brian Lee and was approved unanimously.

Brian Lee moved approval of Resolution R8-2023 to adopt the FY 2024 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Walkinshaw and was approved unanimously.

8. APPROVAL OF THE FY 2024 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM (CCWP)

Referring to the posted material, Nicholas Ramfos said he briefed the board on the draft FY 2024 CCWP at the TPB meeting on February 15. He said the CCWP is an annual work statement that funds alternative commute programs and services designed to help reduce traffic congestion and meet regional air quality goals. He said that there were no comments that had been received regarding the draft. However, he noted that one substantive change had been made in the document at the recommendation of COG/TPB staff. This change updated the eligible corridors for the Flextime Rewards Program based on the recent “Top Bottlenecks” analysis conducted by COG/TPB staff.

Kelly Russell moved approval of Resolution R9-2023 to adopt the FY 2024 CCWP. The motion was seconded by Ann Wheeler and was approved unanimously.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS

Chair Collins introduced Sergio Ritacco for a briefing about the Visualize 2045 Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis.

Sergio Ritacco referred to the presentation and staff memo for Item 9 and stated that the federally required EJ analysis determines whether the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) will have an adverse ‘disparate impact on “low-income” or “minority” populations. He highlighted that the 2022 LRTP Visualize 2045, does not have an adverse ‘disparate impact’ on “low-income” and “minority” populations. He added that the planned transportation projects of Visualize 2045 will have a positive impact on mobility and accessibility that would otherwise not take place.

Sergio Ritacco said that the analysis followed the methodology approved by the TPB in 2018. He added that the first phase of the methodology included identifying Equity Emphasis Areas, or U.S. Census tracts with high concentrations of low-income and traditionally disadvantaged racial and ethnic population groups.

Sergio Ritacco referred to the staff presentation to share additional information about the measures used to conduct the analysis and findings of interest.

Chair Collins thanked Sergio Ritacco for his presentation and called for any questions.

Bridget Newton asked that as staff examines projects in the long-range plan, specifically projects adding tolled roadway capacity, to consider how those projects impact equitable access for traditionally underserved people.

Cindy Dyballa agreed with Bridget Newton’s question and added that she is interested in seeing how the analysis can be further refined.

Kanti Srikanth responded, sharing that there is additional funding in the FY2024 budget to further analyze equity emphasis areas to better understand characteristics about them. He added that such deeper dive into the equity emphasis areas would help provide useful information about the specific challenges residents in these areas face. Such information would assist both transportation agencies and elected

officials in better understanding the issues and determining what interventions can improve mobility and accessibility.

10. INTRODUCTION TO CLARK MERCER

Chair Collins introduced the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Executive Director, Clark Mercer. He added that he met Mr. Mercer through COG's Executive Director Search Committee and noted that Mr. Mercer had alluded to many of TPB's priorities in his presentation to the search committee.

Clark Mercer shared information about his background, including his experience serving the past two Virginia gubernatorial administrations as Chief of Staff. He added that during his conversations with various jurisdictions, he heard several themes like affordable housing, investments in transportation and transit, environmental concerns, and lowering carbon emissions. He highlighted COG's Region Forward/Region United goals, which he said recognizes that people want good paying jobs, decent housing, and a reasonable commute.

Clark Mercer recognized the changes experienced in the past several years, such as the prevalence of hybrid work policies in the region. He acknowledged that working with stakeholders positively and proactively will be important to discuss different options.

Clark Mercer referred to two transportation-related topics discussed earlier, including I-270 and WMATA's budget. He said that with any new administration, there is an opportunity to take time to assess projects and how they meet gubernatorial priorities – and that I-270 is an example of that. He added that WMATA's operational deficit will require difficult conversations on how Metro is funded.

Clark Mercer said that he looked forward to meeting with members in their jurisdictions.

Chair Collins thanked Clark Mercer for his remarks and called for questions.

Vice Chair James Walkinshaw welcomed Clark Mercer and said that he looks forward to working with him.

David Snyder said that he hopes to see highway safety in the region as a priority along with issues like Metro's budget and affordable housing.

Clark Mercer thanked David Snyder for his comment and said that COG serves as a facilitator and listener for those discussions.

11. WMATA REQUEST TO AMEND THE FY 2023-2026 TIP

Chair Collins introduced Item 11, WMATA's request to amend the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP. Andrew Austin referred to the posted material for Item 11. He said that the amendment includes an increase of \$894 million, including funding from the IJA that was not originally programmed in the TIP. He added that this item serves as notice for a 30-day public comment period that concludes on April 13th. He said that the TPB will be asked to review and approve this amendment to the TIP at the May 2023 board meeting.

Allison Davis, VP, Planning at WMATA, added that this amendment adds reauthorized PRIIA federal funding, and additional money from the IJA.

Kanti Srikanth, referring to Cindy Dyballa's earlier question on the TPB budget, added that the amendment reflects federal funding in the TIP for WMATA projects already included in the plan.

12. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:03 P.M. The April 19 TPB meeting will be a virtual meeting.