

Visualize 2045

Technical Input Solicitation: Comments received and updates

**Stacy Cook
Transportation Planner**

**TPB Technical Committee
December 4, 2020**

Agenda Item #4

**visualize
2045**

**A long-range
transportation plan
for the National
Capital Region**

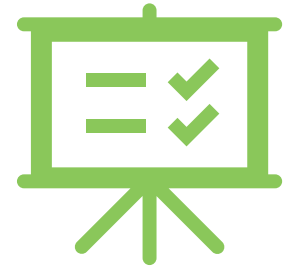


Objective

- 1. Comments received**
- 2. Response to Comments**
- 3. Upcoming activities to address climate resiliency goals**
- 4. Q/A**

A Focus on TPB priorities

- Members that submit projects must answer questions about if and how projects address the TPB Policy Framework
- Regional Transportation Priorities Plan Goals – with a new emphasis on:
 - Aspirational Initiatives
 - Equity
 - Safety
 - **Climate Change mitigation targets**



Comments received, revisions, next steps

- Comments received
- Recent revisions
- Next steps



Staff activities to address climate resiliency goals

- Overview of upcoming activities



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November 9, 2020

Kanti Srikanth
Director of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

Dear Kanti:

The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) recently endorsed goals to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. As the transportation sector is the largest contributor to GHGs in the United States and TPB has purview over the region's transportation plan, TPB has an incredibly important role in ensuring that the region's transportation plan helps to support achievement of the aforementioned regional GHG emissions goals.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) supports TPB's goals of reducing GHGs, improving air quality, and becoming a Climate Ready Region. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990-2018* identifies the transportation sector as the single largest generator of GHGs, accounting for 28 percent of GHG emissions at the national level. COG's 2018 GHG Emissions Inventory also identified "transportation and mobile sources" as the single largest generator of GHGs at the regional level, at 42 percent of GHG emissions. WMATA notes that the *Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan* (Action Plan) is still being developed by COG's Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC).

Many of the Action Plan's recommendations depend upon widespread private-market decisions or federal and state regulations that are subject to changing political forces. TPB does not control, and has little ability to directly influence, consumer behavior for fleet/vehicle purchases, commodity prices, advances in renewable energy technology, etc. But TPB does control the collaborative vision for the region's transportation network and the amount of VMT we can tolerate while meeting shared climate goals. We **can** use the next update of the *Visualize 2045* long-range plan to further those outcomes proven to reduce GHGs: expanded access to transit and non-motorized travel options, shifts in travel mode choice, and reduced trip times and trip length achieved through proximity to transit, housing, jobs, and daily needs.

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The draft Action Plan lists recommendations for actors across multiple sectors, including “reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips/VMTs.” *However, it does not quantify the level of VMT necessary to attain GHG targets.*

In order to foster effective deliberation and decision-making, this letter formalizes the request made by WMATA at the TPB meeting on October 21, 2020 for TPB staff to make clear to the TPB Board the maximum quantity of aggregate VMT that the long-range plan can accommodate without violating the aforementioned GHG goals. If TPB intends to fulfill its obligation to help meet regional climate goals, it must make clear to the jurisdictions, Board members, and public what the regional VMT-GHG relationship is and what the targets must be for its update of *Visualize 2045*.

To that end, WMATA requests TPB staff deliver four findings to the Board:

1. Quantify the VMT levels necessary to attain GHG reduction goals for 2030 and 2050, assuming implementation of all actions identified in the Action Plan. This should be expressed as total VMT rather than per capita VMT, and include a breakdown by light-duty vehicle VMT and medium/heavy-duty vehicle VMT;
2. A more aggressive total VMT target that assumes some of the other recommendations in the Action Plan are not successfully or consistently implemented, such as stricter fuel standards, expanded use of renewable energy sources, or widespread market adoption of alternative fuels; and
3. The VMT levels/additional reductions necessary – in combination with successful actions from other sectors – for the region to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
4. An approach for incorporating these VMT targets into the long-range planning process, project selection, and performance assessment/analysis.

Quantifying the reductions in VMT necessary to attain the GHG targets will give the region’s transportation agencies clear parameters for planning capital investments and transportation services. This analysis should focus on total regional VMT rather than per capita VMT, as it is the total amount of driving and resultant emissions that help determine GHG levels, rather than how much each individual contributes to that total. Establishing total VMT targets as expected outcomes for the next update of *Visualize 2045* is the TPB’s best opportunity to help attain the region’s climate goals.

Sincerely,



Shyam Kannan
Vice President
Office of Planning

November 18, 2020

Hon. Kelly Russell
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
President Pro Tem, Frederick Board of Aldermen

Re: Agenda Items #10, 11: Visualize 2045 Technical Input Solicitation and Performance Measures

Dear Chair Russell,

We commend TPB for adding questions to the project Technical Inputs Solicitation regarding support for regional goals on equity, activity centers, and greenhouse gases. We ask that TPB further strengthen the solicitation with questions on these TPB/COG priorities, more directly tie in the priorities from the Long Range Plan Task Force, and better incorporate the RTPP goals into the plan Performance Measures.

- ***Under Promote Regional Activity Centers, add:***
 - ***Does this project begin or end at a High-Capacity Transit Station or improve non-auto travel within the Station Area?*** Transit-Oriented Communities were identified as a policy focus area of both TPB and the COG board this year. In addition, the draft 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan specifically prioritizes high-capacity transit station areas for housing and job growth. Many regional activity centers lack high-capacity transit, so this question is an essential link to TPB's and COG's priorities.
- ***Under multiple goals, including Operational Effectiveness and Safety, Travel Options, Activity Centers, and the Environment:***
 - ***Is this project expected to reduce auto Vehicle Miles Traveled and increase non-SOV mode share?*** Multiple goals and strategies in TPB and COG plans cite the need to reduce VMT and increase mode shares for transit, walking and biking. The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, Region Forward, Visualize 2045, and both the 2017 and 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plans all include these objectives. The first question regarding RTPP goals asks the project sponsor to identify all travel mode options that this project provides, enhances, supports or promotes. However, TPB must also ask the sponsor to demonstrate that the project would reduce vehicle miles traveled and offer a substantial shift in travel mode to non-SOV modes.

TPB "Aspirational Objectives" should be direct requirements

Instead of simply providing more information on how projects "support or advance" TPB Aspirational Initiatives, the solicitation document should ask specifically, **"Does the project support and advance the TPB Aspirational Initiatives?"** The TPB should also cease calling these "aspirational initiatives" and explicitly identify these as priority planning goals. (although we will continue to express concerns about the worst performing of the initiatives, express toll lanes).

Linking the RTPP and Performance Measures and Tracking

Visualize 2045 needs to better incorporate the RTPP questions into the Performance Based Planning and Programming measures. The 2018 plan mostly uses federally required metrics that fall short. For example, the safety goals only refer to highway and transit safety but do not address general roadway safety where most pedestrians and bicyclists, the most vulnerable system users, are at risk. Tracking important priorities like greenhouse gas emission reductions, access to transit, mode share, VMT, and

equitable access to jobs and services need to be incorporated in the plan and online dashboard (see [here](#) and [here](#) for clearly presented regional indicator tracker examples from Twin Cities and Denver).

Sincerely,

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director

Bill Pugh
Senior Policy Fellow