
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

October 18, 2023

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *IN-PERSON*

Reuben Collins, TPB Chair – Charles County
Mark Rawlings – DDOT
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Takis Karantonis – Arlington County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Amir Shahpar - VDOT

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *VIRTUALLY*

Christina Henderson – DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Sandra Marks – DDOT
Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning
Mati Bazurto – Bowie
Denise Mitchell – College Park
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
David Edmondson – City of Frederick
Neil Harris – Gaithersburg
Dennis Enslinger - Gaithersburg
Eric Olson – Prince George’s County Council
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive
Cindy Dyballa – Takoma Park
Shana Fulcher – Takoma Park
Heather Murphy – MDOT
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Catherine Reid – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
Rob Donaldson- Loudoun County
Kristen Umstattd – Loudoun County
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Ann Wheeler – Prince William County
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Allison Davis – WMATA
Mark Phillips – WMATA
Dan Koenig – FTA
Laurel Hammig – NPS

MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson
Andrew Meese
Nick Ramfos
Tim Canan

Mark Moran
Jeff King
Paul DesJardin
Leo Pineda
John Swanson
Sergio Ritacco
Rachel Beyerle
Christina Finch
Marcela Moreno
Deborah Etheridge
Kim Sutton
Andrew Austin
Dusan Vuksan
Lindsey Martin
William Bacon
Erin Morrow
Charlene Howard
Pierre Gaunard
Kathrine Rainone
Richard Wallace – CAC Chair
Shawn Kiernan - MDOT
Kari Snyder – MDOT
Sandy Hertz - MDOT
Chris Berg – VDOT
Doug Carr – USRC
Stephen Kenny – Montgomery County Council
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County
Maricela Cordova – MCDOT
Travis Johnston – MDOT/MTA
Stephen Miller – MDOT/MTA
Dean Del Peschio – MDOT/MTA
Jeff Ensor - Amtrak
DJ Stadtler – VPRA
Branden Buchanan – ABA
Bill Orleans – public
Ian Dunan – The Washington Post
Bill Pugh – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Hanna Pajewski – NVTA
Avery Daugherty – DRPT
Emma Cross – DDOT
Chris Swanson

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. He described the procedures for conducting the meeting.

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

Bill Pugh from the Coalition for Smarter Growth commented that the states' carbon reduction strategies should reflect TPB's adopted policies, including the following: the TPB's greenhouse gas reduction goal

and endorsed strategies; findings from the TPB's climate change mitigation study; quantified targets for per capital VMT reduction and EV adoption; addressing increased greenhouse gas reductions from state highway capacity expansion plans; and demonstrating levels of implementation that DOT strategies would need to achieve VMT, EV, and GHG targets. He also said that the projects submitted for the Visualize 2050 plan are critical for how the region achieves its greenhouse gas targets.

Lyn Erickson said that between noon September 19 and noon October 17, the TPB received 44 individual project comments and eight project suggestions from the Visualize 2050 initial project list feedback form. In addition, there were seven comments submitted via email and one comment submitted via voicemail to the TPB comment page. A summary, as well as each individual comment, can be found on the meeting web page. She reiterated that staff has created a project list feedback form on the TPB comment page to help share specific project comments with project sponsors. She said that staff is sharing the comments twice a month, at the Technical Committee and at TPB. She said these comments were attached to the memo. She said a short summary of them was provided at the front of the memo and then provided in full. She said that all the comments received were posted on the website.

Lyn Erickson summarized the rest of the comments. She said that George Aburn sent six separate emails containing many attachments. She said his main points continue to question why TPB is not involved in project-level hot spot analysis and continue to state that MWCOG climate change goals are weak. She said that Gail Sullivan, a member of the Community Advisory Committee, submitted a voicemail comment expressing concern about the adequacy of the time needed to safely transfer between buses and/or rail, bus bunching, and operators stopping and blocking oncoming traffic. She said Bill Pugh with the Coalition for Smarter Growth submitted written comments regarding the state carbon reduction strategies. Those comments were consistent with the verbal statement he presented earlier at the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Approval of the minutes was moved by Pamela Sebesky and was seconded by Takis Karantonis. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Mark Rawlings said the Technical Committee met on October 6 and reviewed two items for inclusion on TPB agenda: Approval of projects recommended for funding for the Transit Within Reach program and a briefing on the federal Carbon Reduction Program, specifically the state carbon reduction strategies. He said that one item was presented for information and discussion: A briefing on Visualize 2050, which included comment analysis, transit input, TIP inputs, and other updates.

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

Referring to the posted material, Mr. Wallace said the Community Advisory Committee met virtually on October 12. He said the committee received a briefing on the TPB's draft 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. He said the committee spoke about the importance of tracking investments in bicycling and pedestrian facilities and encouraged education to increase mode share. He said that CAC members said they want to stay connected with the TPB's work on bicycle and pedestrian planning. He said the CAC also received a briefing from WMATA on the Better Bus Network Region Redesign. He said that committee members were interested in how WMATA ensured regional coordination with proposed changes and transfers. They also wanted to know more about the connection between the network redesign and Visualize 2050. Finally, the committee asked clarifying questions about public feedback that has been received.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the Steering Committee met on October 6 and took the following actions:

- Approved the request from the District Department of Transportation to increase the number of miles of roadways within the District that are part of the city's critical urban freight corridor.
- Approved Maryland Department of Transportation's request to amend the cost and schedule for the FY 2023-2026 TIP for the Maryland 4 at Suitland Parkway interchange construction project.

Kanti Srikanth called attention to letters of support from the TPB on behalf of TPB member agencies who submitted applications for federal grants. He said the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee approved the revisions to the state implementation plan (SIP) for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, for submission to the U.S. EPA. He also said the TPB's State of Public Transportation report for 2022 is available.

Kanti Srikanth made two announcements that were not in the posted material. He said the region's Street Smart Safety Campaign would be kicked off on October 25. He also announced that the COG annual meeting would be held in December. He encouraged board members to RSVP for that event and to submit nominations for COG awards.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Collins noted that extensive work has been underway to address WMATA's funding challenges. He asked Kanti Srikanth to include a briefing on these developments at a future COG meeting. He also asked that a future agenda include an update on the express lanes project on I-270 and the Beltway in Maryland.

ACTION ITEM

7. TRANSIT WITHIN REACH PROJECT APPROVALS

Referring to the presentation, John Swanson explained that the Transit Within Reach Program funds design and preliminary engineering concepts to improve bike and walk connections to existing high-capacity transit stations or stations that will be open to riders by 2030. He said that the Transit Within Reach Program funds consulting services for preliminary engineering and design.

John Swanson stated that this year's solicitation has \$250,000 available to fund projects, and six applications were received. He said that there are three recommended projects.

John Swanson said the first project is near the Dunn Loring Metro in Fairfax County, and the TPB will fund 30 percent design for a road diet on Prosperity Avenue. He stated that the project will reduce travel lanes from four to two and include protected bike lanes that extend east of the study area.

John Swanson described the City of Gaithersburg project which will be a shared use path between Old Town Gaithersburg and Washington Grove. He said the project will connect two MARC stations and will be coordinated with Montgomery County which will fund and ultimately build a trail all the way to the Shady Grove Metro station.

John Swanson said the District of Columbia project would include engineering for an updated sidewalk on 9th Street NW near the E Street corridor. He said that area sees a lot of pedestrian movement, and the

road is on a property that is not slated for redevelopment and likely to remain hazardous into the near future, so DDOT thought it a prime project to put forward for the program.

Chair Collins called for questions. There being no questions, the Board unanimously approved funding for the Transit Within Reach projects.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8. CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM – STATE CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Erin Morrow referred to the presentation and provided an overview of the Carbon Reduction Program. She said the program provides states and territories with \$6.4 billion in formula funding over five years and requires states and territories to develop a carbon reduction strategy consultation with MPOs in the state by November 15, 2023. She explained that the TPB meeting is the consultation with the three state DOTs and the MPO.

Shawn Kiernan presented the draft carbon reduction strategy for Maryland. He said the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act established carbon reduction goals in 2009, and the current Climate Solutions Now Act passed in 2022 requires a 60 percent reduction in GHG emissions from 2006 by 2031 and a plan for achieving net zero emissions in the state by 2045. He said that all strategies in the draft have already been publicly shared.

Shawn Kiernan explained the sections of the carbon reduction strategies document which include an introduction, ongoing planning, existing carbon reduction strategies, implementing the strategies, timeline for development of the draft CRS, and an appendix that connects federal requirements with the work that is in the Maryland document.

Chris Berg said that Virginia's carbon reduction strategy document will provide background on the program, how funding is allocated, and carbon reduction initiatives across the state. He said that the document will also include the overall inventory of emissions in the state and trends, coordination and outreach that has gone into the strategy, potential strategies and analysis tools, and strategy implementation.

Chris Berg described the consultation coordination and outreach piece of the strategy. He said that the initial public survey saw a focus on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, bus rapid transit, and electric vehicle infrastructure. He said that Virginia heard stakeholder feedback on the importance of highlighting co-benefits such as improved safety with bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure, economic development, improved access to jobs through transit, health quality of life, reduction of air pollution, and accessibility.

Emma Cross said that the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) sent the TPB its carbon reduction strategy. She said the strategy document introduces the District's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and describes how DDOT is going to focus on transportation options that reduce vehicle miles traveled along with GHG emissions.

Emma Cross said that DDOT's greenhouse carbon reduction strategy includes strategies that support goals laid out in existing plans including moveDC, goDCgo, and Sustainable 2.0, and Visualize 2045. She said that DDOT's strategy will include examples of DDOT-eligible projects that are on the wish list or are existing projects that have been successful and could use more funding. She said that the projects include electrification of freight and delivery vehicles, idling food trucks, LEV streetlights, bike lane and network trails, bus priority program, and bus electrification.

Takis Karantonis asked where Virginia is in terms of timeline and plan for carbon reduction. He said that he is concerned about SMART SCALE being tweaked in a way that favors highway expansion, which can be necessary, but does not signal that budget decisions and policies are focused on carbon reduction.

Chris Berg said that the Virginia carbon strategy document is fairly narrowly focused on letting Virginia and the MPOs around the state implement carbon reduction funding. He said that VDOT has a number of efforts underway in VDOT's decarbonization program that are working on more holistic efforts through electric vehicle programs, low carbon concrete, and other initiatives but those are outside the scope of the strategy of the document presented. He stated that other VDOT offices will continue to work on broader policy issues.

James Walkinshaw stated that DDOT's strategies were posted to the board and the federal deadline is November 15. He asked whether the TPB staff will have time before November 15 to provide substantive comments. He asked VDOT staff whether they were committed to reviewing comments and incorporating changes into the strategies.

Kanti Srikanth said that TPB staff will make it a priority to review the draft document as quickly as possible. He stated that the TPB staff did provide thoughts on how climate change is a priority for the board, and the specific strategies the board has identified. He said that the TPB staff was able to review the Maryland and District strategies and will do the same if a Virginia draft is available.

James Walkinshaw said that he is disappointed that TPB members will not have an opportunity to weigh in on VDOT's strategies. He asked VDOT staff if they will be able to have the strategies to TPB staff for review and comment.

Chris Berg said that the document still needs to go through internal review. He said that VDOT has provided opportunities for TPB staff to weigh in and has received information on where the board's positions are and what goals and priorities have been flagged to highlight. He stated that VDOT is trying to honor the fact that there are several MPOs around the state that have different priorities and different carbon reduction strategies. He said the state's strategy is highlighting individual efforts of MPOs while still allowing the funding program to be applied.

Laurel Hammig said that a comment for all the DOTs to consider in their strategies is the value of trees in carbon sequestration and incorporating trees in transportation projects as appropriate. She said for background and context, the George Washington Memorial Parkway is looking at forest health and opportunities for improvement. She said the improvements made in the parkway corridor could be mutually beneficial.

Cindy Dyballa said that she will send technical comments on the Maryland plan. She said that it is clear from the presentation that the strategy document is a placeholder and that things are about to change. She said that it is not clear from the executive summary or the section on policies whether the state changing greenhouse gas goals means that Maryland is going to have to do something sooner than four years from now. She urged Maryland staff to consider making a commitment within a set timeframe that might reflect well in terms of obtaining federal funding beyond the baseline.

Gary Erenich stated that there are things unresolved that Montgomery County would like to see added or emphasized. He suggested that the TPB Steering Committee, at its November committee meeting, could submit MPO support for submitting plans to the Federal Highway Administration by November 15.

Gary Erenich said that after looking at the report, he did not see how MDOT is going to program new funds and what would be the priorities for funding. He asked how funds would be accessed for local or regional projects. He commented that it is interesting that the TPB is receiving 20 percent of the funds.

He said that he thinks it would be helpful to have an explanation of how the percentages are calculated in the document.

Kanti Srikanth said that that funding being set aside for the TPB planning area and process for selecting projects are discussions that are currently being held with the District, Maryland, and Virginia. He stated that these topics will be brought forward as a separate briefing item to the TPB. He stated that any project receiving the Carbon Reduction funds will have to be approved by the TPB in its TIP, so there will be decisions for the TPB to weigh in on decisions being made,

Kanti Srikanth stated that the funding amounts shown in the slide are numbers published by the Federal Highway Administration for the first two years of the five year program and so staff was taking federally published numbers and providing a sense for the range of funding that this region can expect under this new program.

Kanti Srikanth said that TPB staff can report to the Steering Committee, and if the VDOT document is received by then, TPB staff will review it and provide comments at the Steering Committee. He said that TPB staff have already commented on the MDOT and DDOT documents.

9. INTERCITY RAIL AND BUS TRAVEL WORK SESSION RECAP

Andrew Meese referred to the introductory memo included in the work session materials, He said that Eric Randall provided an overview at the work session including why the TPB would study intercity rail and bus and recent and planned TPB intercity staff work activities.

Andrew Meese stated that D.J. Stadtler of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority provided an update on the authority's work with Virginia Railway Express and Amtrak on planning and providing passenger rail service in Virginia. He said that D.J. Stadtler spoke about future service expansion, addition of track and sidings and details of the Long Bridge project. He noted that VPRA also reviewed the Alexandria fourth track, updates to the Crystal City station, the Franconia-Springfield bypass, and projects that are part of Transforming Rail in Virginia.

Andrew Meese stated that Travis Johnston of the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration gave an overview of Maryland intercity bus and rail operations including BayRunner and Greyhound services using federal Section 5311 (f) funds. He said that Travis Johnston also gave a summary of ridership on MARC trains and service expansion plans. He stated that MARC is currently developing an agreement for run-through service to Alexandria and exploring the possibility of a pilot service.

Andrew Meese commented that Brandon Buchanan of the American Bus Association discussed intercity bus service from Union Station and curbside locations, stating that intercity bus connects to all other modes and provide notable services, such as airport, military, and college services.

Andrew Meese said that Jeffrey Ensor of Amtrak provided a national overview including route miles and ridership, stating that the Northeast Regional and Acela services recently surpassed pre-pandemic ridership levels. He said that Amtrak is committed to doubling ridership by 2040 and being carbon net zero by 2045. He stated the Jeffrey Ensor encouraged the TPB board to spread awareness and promotion of Amtrak to the public, consider ways to enhance access to Amtrak stations, and support opportunities from the bipartisan infrastructure law for funding and improvements.

Andrew Meese reported that Doug Carr provided an overview of the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, discussed ridership trends from 2018, and spoke about the Union Station expansion project which will integrate commuter and intercity rail services and bus. He said that Doug Carr noted that

regional benefits would include supporting introduction of through-running commuter trains, delivering fiscal and economic growth benefits, increasing train capacity, service reliability, and enhancing overall passenger experience.

Andrew Meese said that the questions, answers, and comments that came up during the question-and-answer period included a question on potential impacts on traditional African American communities from potential track expansions under consideration for the MARC-Brunswick line. He said that MTA responded that they would consider the impacts in their studies.

Andrew Meese said that there was a question on the potential of expansion of track south of Silver Spring, and this was deemed difficult because of the tight urban environment in that location. He said there was a question on how Amtrak's goals for increased ridership relate to goals for mode shift away from driving.

Andrew Meese reported that Kanti Srikanth wrapped up the work session with overview comments, and Kanti Srikanth noted the TPB's and the TPB chair's goals to strengthen consideration of intercity travel in regional planning, and highlighted the need for investments, especially at and in the vicinity of stations; improving access to stations; securing funding for infrastructure improvements and for operations; and to promote use of intercity bus and rail travel for environmental, safety, and congestion benefits.

Kanti Srikanth said that intercity travel is one of the more recent federal requirements for the TPB. He said that when the TPB develops the Visualize 2050 long-range transportation plan, it needs to incorporate intercity bus and rail travel.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB has conducted intercity work activities over the past two years. He said the first activity was a survey of intercity bus service providers, and the TPB has also completed a potential demand study for VRE/MARC run-through service. He said that Maryland and Virginia are in discussions, and they have an MOU to pilot that service.

David Snyder stated that he thinks the development of intercity bus and rail is an exciting project, and hopefully the TPB can play a key role in further expanding the infrastructure, especially getting additional rail, and not requiring a reliance on freight rail for passenger rail.

10. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:39 P.M. The next meeting will be on November 15, 2023.