
**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONTHLY REPORT TO THE TPB**

December 18, 2024
Ra Amin, CAC Chair

The December meeting of the CAC was held virtually on Thursday, December 12. The meeting featured the annual discussion between the CAC and TPB leadership. Also on the agenda was the “Act Locally” Round-Robin and planning for the last meeting of the present CAC cohort.

TPB/CAC Leadership Roundtable

CAC Chair, Ra Amin, welcomed everyone and invited the TPB leadership to provide opening remarks, after which the meeting broke out into smaller groups, and then re-convened for a report-out and summary.

Opening Remarks

Chair Henderson emphasized the importance of traffic safety and regional cooperation in addressing transportation issues. Vice Chair Walkinshaw highlighted the positive impact of the TPB in improving the decision-making processes at all levels of government, and Vice Chair Harris discussed challenges with balancing mobility, air quality, and safety. The need for better enforcement of traffic laws and finding sustainable and equitable funding for transit was generally discussed.

Questions and comments included the following:

As part of DMVMoves, has the idea of land value return been discussed as a means of funding transit?

Fairfax County has used special taxing districts for the construction of the Metro Silver Line through an additional property tax on large property owners in Tysons. Those property owners also have an additional transportation district tax for creation of a street grid in Tysons. What works there may not be feasible in other locales, but Metro's operating deficit is substantial, and alternative funding sources, including a property tax, are being explored.

The TPB and this CAC are interjurisdictional groups. The infrastructure is shared among the three jurisdictions, but there are bottlenecks at the river crossings and along the I-270 corridor. What are possible solutions that could satisfy as many people as possible?

The TPB will be spending a lot of time on this issue. There are studies underway to extend HOT lanes from where they are currently to I-495 across the Wilson Bridge. There are concerns about preserving the right-of-way for a future blue line, while recognizing that HOT lanes could also provide bus service that does not currently exist. Similarly, with I-270 corridor improvements, there are different points of view. These are discussions that will involve all the jurisdictions. People commute to and from jobs all over the region. The real issue is funding capital improvements.

State-based Breakouts

Participants broke out into groups for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, and after reconvening, summarized their discussion.

District of Columbia. Safety was the major topic of discussion, including physical changes such as raised sidewalks and bus bulb-outs. Sometimes these changes improve safety for one mode that might negatively impact another mode, so all the various modes and travelers need to be evaluated when making a physical improvement. Enforcement disparities were also discussed, including in-person and electronic ticketing and reciprocity between jurisdictions. The role schools could play in teaching about transportation etiquette and safety was another topic.

Maryland. Regarding the current state of transportation, look at as many alternatives as possible rather than the next big thing, for example using the Transportation Alternatives program (TAP) to make significant, incremental changes. In terms of connecting with the community, there have been forums and use of social media that have had mixed success. Also discussed was the need to keep transportation connected to land use and economic development (all three go together), the economics of offering free transit, and the importance of ensuring the different transportation programs coordinate.

Virginia. Regarding the current state of transportation, there has been progress since 2007. Congestion is the primary concern that has been alleviated by the Silver Line and increasing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Metro is stronger today, notwithstanding the funding issues. There are challenges, but overall, there's optimism. Regarding engaging the community, various methods, such as surveys and meetings, have been used to engage the community in decision-making, but efforts should be made to connect with communities that feel less empowered. Also discussed was utilizing existing Metro infrastructure for enhancing public transportation, since expanding the system is expensive.

Questions and comments included the following:

Visualize2050 does not include plans for enhancing the WMATA system or improving Metro for future residents. The Purple Line and Silver Line were not initially included in long-range plans but were added later. Understanding the long-range plan is financially constrained, isn't it short-sighted not to include these essential improvements?

Projects have to mature to a certain point before they can be reflected in long-range planning. Several factors can play into when such projects make it into the plan. A lot of work and coordination has to happen before a project is ready.

The session concluded with a reflection on possible roles the CAC could play, noting that youth instruction on how to use transit, transit etiquette, and safety might be one area. The importance of keeping the big picture was also emphasized, reflecting that we are a region that is competing against other regions to establish a world-class transportation system.

ACT LOCALLY ROUND-ROBIN

Chair Amin opened discussion on the activities that members are doing in their local communities. Members have been involved in Prince William County's design manual updates for development to include active transportation and other elements that make getting around easier. Chair Amin shared that he received the 2024 Advocate of the Year award from the DC Highway Safety Office.

ATTENDANCE

CAC Members

Ra Amin, Chair
Christina Farver
Jeff Parnes
Nancy Abeles
Daniel Papiernik
Mark Scheufler
Lorena Rios
Rick Rybeck

Timothy Davis

Zach Israel

TPB Board

Christina Henderson
James Walkinshaw
Neil Harris
Heather Edelman

Staff

Leonardo Pineda
Rachel Beyerle
Laura Bachle
Kanti Srikanth
Lyn Erickson