
**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING**

February 15, 2023

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Reuben Collins, TPB Chair – Charles County
Charles Allen – DC Council
Christina Henderson – DC Council
Heather Edelman – DC Council
Lezlie Rupert – DDOT
Sakina Khan – DDOT
Mati Bazarro – Bowie
Patrick Wojahn – College Park
Denise Mitchell – College Park
Mark Mishler – Frederick County
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick
David Edmondson – City of Frederick
Neil Harris - Gaithersburg
Dennis Enslinger – Gaithersburg
Brian Lee – Laurel
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County
Gary Erenrich – Montgomery County Executive
Oluseyi Olugbenie – Prince George’s Executive
Victor Weissberg – Prince George’s County Executive
Bridget Newton – Rockville
Cindy Dyballa – Takoma Park
R. Earl Lewis, Jr. – MDOT
Jeffrey Hirsch – MDOT
Canek Aguirre - Alexandria
Takis Karantonis – Arlington County
Dan Malouff – Arlington County
Catherine Read – City of Fairfax
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County
James Walkinshaw – Fairfax County
David Snyder – Falls Church
Adam Shellenberger – Fauquier County
Corinna Sigsbury – Loudoun County
Pamela Sebesky – City of Manassas
Jeanette Rishell – City of Manassas Park
Victor Angry – Prince William County
Paolo Belita – Prince William County
John Lynch – VDOT
Bill Cuttler – VDOT
Maria Sinner – VDOT
Mark Phillips – WMATA
Julia Koster – NCPD
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
Marcela Moreno
Rachel Beyerle
Mark Moran
Jeff King
Jamie Bufkin
Kim Sutton
Deborah Etheridge
Justine Gonzalez-Velez
Richard A. Wallace – CAC Chair
Kari Snyder – MDOT

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 completely virtually. He described the procedures for conducting virtual meetings.

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.

Lyn Erickson said the TPB received two comments via email. She said a memo with a summary of the comments as well as the entire comments can be found on the TPB meeting page. She said that Tad Aburn, a former Maryland Department of Environment representative on the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, provided written comment asking the TPB to work through Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on transportation issues impacted by climate change, including emissions goals and air quality conformity. She said the second comment was from Stewart Schwartz, the executive director for the Coalition for Smarter Growth, where they and 38 signatories provided a letter detailing concerns and recommendations for the TPB to consider about the Visualize 2050 plan update process.

David Snyder said his jurisdiction of Falls Church, as well as other jurisdictions, had received a joint letter authored by the Coalition for Smarter Growth. He asked if staff was going to respond to that letter. He said the letter included a request for individual jurisdictions to commit to a public process regarding their projects in the TPB's long-range transportation plan, and he said he wanted to indicate that his jurisdiction would make that commitment.

Mr. Srikanth said he would cover the comments and responses under Item 7.

2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 18, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

David Snyder made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Denise Mitchell and was unanimously approved.

3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Mark Rawlings said the Technical Committee met on February 3. He said the committee reviewed several items on the TPB's February agenda, including the update on the Visualize 2050 Technical Input Solicitation document and plan development kickoff; the draft Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2024; and the draft Commuter Connections work program for FY 2024.

Mr. Rawlings said the committee also reviewed informational items including the key findings of a seven-day panel survey evaluation to assess the effectiveness of using Smartphone app-based data collection technology for conducting regional travel surveys, and recent updates and upcoming activities of the continuous airport system planning program.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Referring to the posted material, Richard Wallace, 2023 chair of the CAC, gave the committee's report. He said the new CAC had its first meeting on February 9. He said that members introduced themselves at the meeting and staff provided an overview of the TPB process and anticipated activities this year. TPB Chair Collins attended the meeting and provided an overview of what he expects in the year ahead.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the Steering Committee approved three amendments at its February meeting. The first amendment, at the request of DDOT, added about \$6.6 million for the national electric vehicle infrastructure deployment program and a couple of ongoing activities related to the D.C. Circulator. The second amendment, at the request of MDOT, added about \$400,000 in planning and engineering funds for the removal of a bridge along Maryland 97 over Reddy Branch. The third amendment, request by VDOT, adds about \$5 million towards right-of-way acquisitions for the I 495 NEXT project.

Referring to the posted material, Kanti Srikanth said the TPB sent six letters of support over the past month for applications from TPB member jurisdictions for federal RAISE grants. He noted that the packet also included a notice that the EPA has certified that the region has met the 2015 national air quality standard for ground-level ozone. He called attention to a notice that a new federal grant program had been created called the Safe Streets for All program. Details about that program were in the packet. Finally, he reminded the board the application deadline is March 3 for the Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) program and the Regional Roadway Safety Program.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Collins said he enjoyed participating in the first CAC meeting. He said the CAC membership reflects the region's diversity and therefore the committee offers a useful tool for the TPB to better understand the interests of the region's residents.

7. VISUALIZE 2050: TECHNICAL INPUTS SOLICITATION APPROVAL AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT KICKOFF

Introducing the next item, Chair Collins emphasized the importance of the long-rang plan update. He said the process for the plan's development should be transparent and participatory. He said that when the board approved the last long-range plan update, they agreed to not wait four years until the next update.

This new update, he said, will be different because it will ask the transportation agencies to reexamine every project that is the current plan and resubmit projects that will better advance the region's goals for improving mobility, addressing equity, increasing transit ridership, and addressing climate change. He said the board would be asked to approve a call for projects that will begin the update process.

Lyn Erickson referred to the presentation and staff memo for Item 7 and stated that staff will ask for the TPB's approval of the Technical Input Solicitation document which will kick off the TPB's next plan and TIP update.

Lyn Erickson informed the board that the action they are taking will officially launch the process of updating the region's long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program adopted by the board in June 2022.

Lyn Erickson said that the Technical Inputs Solicitation asks the TPB members to include a resubmission of all of the projects after an examination of each project and how it supports the TPB goals and policies. She said that the solicitation includes three documents: a summary of regional goals and priorities, a summary of TPB scenario studies, and a list of projects from the long-range transportation plan being returned to TPB members for reexamination.

Responding to Mr. Snyder's request to address the comments from the 38 different signatory groups summarized earlier by staff, Kanti Srikanth said that the comments have four broad points that they are asking the TPB to consider. He said that one comment is about the frequently asked questions document and a suggestion that the response to one of those questions should be modified. He explained that the frequently asked questions are not part of the solicitation document that the TPB is asked to approve and that the frequently asked questions are responses to questions received about the update process. He said that the information provided under question number four in the document responds to the specifics of the question that was asked while the proposed modification to the response is beyond the scope of the question.

Kanti Srikanth said that another comment asked for the TPB members to commit to conducting public input on the projects they plan to propose. He stated that the TPB has always encouraged members to seek and reflect public input, and the TPB does its own public input process. He stated that the TPB has added a second comment period of four months that will run concurrently with TPB member discussion and decision about their projects. He said that if the board wants each of its members to communicate their commitment to hold a formal public input process, that is something that the TPB staff can assist in collecting such information.

Kanti Srikanth stated that another comment received was that the zero-based budgeting process is too broad because many projects would be exempt from a reexamination by the TPB member agencies. He stated that the basis for zero based budgeting stems to 2021 when the TPB adopted a resolution that was based on a robust discussion about doing zero-based budgeting and the language in the resolution states that "projects that are currently under construction or currently funded with federal, state, regional, local, or private funds, will be exempt from such a reexamination requirement."

Kanti Srikanth stated that the TPB staff, in response, pulled every single project that is within the TPB planning area from the database, and worked with the transportation agencies to identify which of those are under construction and which of those have funding committed to them and that list is being provided to the TPB member agencies. He noted that about three-quarters of the projects in the TPB's long-range transportation plan are under construction or have committed funding.

Kanti Srikanth said that TPB staff followed the intent of the TPB's decision to follow the zero-based budgeting approach, even though the projects are exempt from reexamination, and TPB staff included them

in the projects sent back to the agencies and urges member agencies to reexamine these projects and consider making changes to them as appropriate.

Kanti Srikanth said that another comment was that the Technical Input Solicitation document directions should be clear in requiring the TPB members to prioritize projects supporting key regional policy goals. He stated that the detailed comment remarks, "Last time when you had the solicitation document you had text in there that was very explicit, and that text has been modified, and we believe that the modification weakens the intent, and therefore you should consider adding it back."

Kanti Srikanth commented that the staff response is that the language in the solicitation document strengthens the expectation. He noted that the language in the 2021 solicitation referred only to the aspirational initiatives, land use, and climate goals. Srikanth said that the TPB has adopted four goals and priority documents dating to a 1998 set of comprehensive goals called the Vision, then an endorsement of Region Forward and then the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. He said that none of the documents were included in the 2021 language.

Kanti Srikanth said the current Technical Inputs Solicitation document includes a synthesis of all the regional goals and priorities into one document, and staff is asking TPB members to consider all these things when proposing projects.

Chair Collins invited a motion to approve the Technical Input Solicitation document to update Visualize 2050.

Pamela Sebesky made a motion to approve the TPB's Technical Inputs Solicitation document. Kelly Russell seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Walkinshaw called for discussion.

Jeanette Rishell asked for clarification about the first bullet point on page 4 of the item memo that states, "A zero-based budgeting approach will help focus efforts on projects that are in a developmental stage where the TPB goals and priorities can be used to influence the scope of the projects, including dropping them from further consideration if they do not meet TPB goals and objectives." She asked staff to clarify how the statement meshes with the resolution adopted by the TPB that states, "Projects with funding shall be exempt." She noted that the same resolution also dealt with zero-based budgeting, but it did not speak of dropping projects but addressed resubmission. She asked whether this means taking the projects that have gone through a local process and subjecting them to an undefined standard of approval.

Kanti Srikanth referred to the second bullet on page 3 of the agenda memo that says, "Consistent with TPB resolution R19, step one of the zero-based budgeting approach is to determine which projects are under construction or currently funded, and those that are not. The TPB intends to retain projects under construction or that -- having funding and, as such, would be exempt from the resubmission. The TPB, however, urges its member agencies to reexamine these projects and consider changes to the projects where appropriate."

Kanti Srikanth clarified that the TPB is communicating the intent and the language in the TPB resolution, which is that the TPB intends to keep projects that are under construction or have funding of any kind -- local, regional, state, private, federal -- in Visualize 2050. He said that the language Ms. Rishell noted recognizes that there might be opportunities to make revisions to projects that have funding yet are not under construction, including if appropriate dropping the project; the solicitation does not preclude any agency from making such revisions if they so choose.

Kanti Srikanth said that if a project with a completion date 15 years into the future has funding just for a study, and if the priorities or purpose as seen today is different, and if there is an opportunity to discontinue that project and repurpose the funding for some other project, the TPB does not want to preclude that option. He said that the member jurisdictions have the responsibility to examine the projects and determine whether to keep a project.

Jeanette Rishell asked whether projects that have funding shall be exempt and will be rolled over. Kanti Srikanth referred to the resolution language in R19-2021 which states that, "Projects currently under construction or currently funded shall be exempt from such requirement," and the requirement refers to reexamination. He said that what the resolution says is that the project will be exempt from the requirement.

Jeanette Rishell noted that R19-2021 does not speak of dropping projects and only addresses resubmission and asked if Srikanth could speak to that.

Kanti Srikanth said that the resolution addresses reexamination and that every member agency is asked to reexamine every project and submit them back, either with changes or with no changes.

Takis Karantonis thanked the TPB staff for the materials and explanation. He stated that he received a letter containing a concern that there is not enough clear statement to ask agencies when they reconsider their projects or then when they conceive new projects, that they take adherence to the region's climate goals as seriously as TPB has taken when it approved these climate goals.

Takis Karantonis asked what is going to be different in the Visualize 2050 process from Visualize 2045. He asked what staff's expectations for this update were.

Kanti Srikanth said that he does not recall this sort of comprehensive reexamination of the long-range plan. He stated that this is the first time that the TPB is sending adopted goals, targets, and aspirations back to the members in a synthesized document hoping that the document will allow members to include the goals and priorities in their own decision-making process. He stated that he hopes that the regional goals and priorities that the board has worked on for a number of years will get included in the decision making.

Takis Karantonis said that he thinks the advocacy to a more explicit adherence to a rapidly evolving set of goals has significantly improved but they put new constraints on how the TPB makes decisions here and how the TPB board wants to signal to participating entities that the TPB expects to see this adherence to these goals and that the projects should be improved in a certain direction.

Vice Chair Walkinshaw said that in Fairfax County this process and these goals have already started a dialogue on the Fairfax County Board and with county staff about prioritization of projects.

Bridget Newton said that the fact that the TPB met the 2021 climate goal has more to do with COVID and the lack of driving than with many other things and encouraged continuing in that direction of making sure the region is meeting goals. She then referred to a letter that from Kacy Kostiuk, former member of the TPB, that she had received and noted that Kanti had addressed it, about the input solutions guide. She said that it's important for both TPB, our member jurisdictions, as well to understand exactly what the goals are and to try to meet them. Noting comments from Takis Karantonis that understanding that things have changed and things are ever evolving and through this update, we want to make sure that just because a plan has been in the works but without any funding for a long time doesn't mean that's exactly what we need right now. She appreciated that this new process gives member agencies the flexibility.

Bridget Newton asked about zero-based budgeting projects number 3 and 19 in Maryland and not seeing two asterisks and whether that means there is a possibility for a project to be reevaluated and removed at the request of the agency.

Lyn Erickson explained that there is a single asterisk and a double asterisk, and the notes will apply to every project on the green list and that the orange list has a note that applies to every project on the orange list.

David Snyder said that he thinks for the first time that the issue of top-down and bottom-up and transportation planning is brought together more effectively than ever before with what the TPB is doing and urged the TPB to move forward. He said this with his preference, there would be more, but others who would have less, and encouraged consensus.

Vice Chair Walkinshaw stated that Jeanette Rishell requests that the written record reflect the intention for Resolution 19-2021 to take precedence in light of the verbiage that she referred to in discussion.

Cindy Dyballa asked staff to provide a copy of the booklet [instruction manual for agency staff entering projects into the TPB database].

Kanti Srikanth explained that the booklet being referred to was an instruction booklet to help agency staff enter project related data into TPB's database and that staff had provided that instruction manual to every TPB member transportation agency so that their staff can use it. He said that staff would provide members a copy as well.

Cindy Dyballa said that she is one of the folks who would like to see more emphasis on the climate goals and integration of them. She mentioned that she had received comments on the solicitation document from the former representative of the city and asked for clarification about one of the comments she had received. She stated that the Technical Inputs Solicitation says, "policy guide," on page 94 of the packet, and it's a separate attachment on the website. She said that she who would like to see more emphasis on the climate goals and integration of them. She noted that in the comment letter from the 38 agencies, they say that the TPB had approved a paragraph to be in there, and now it's not, and she would appreciate revisiting that point.

Kanti Srikanth said that when the TPB issued a solicitation document in 2021 for Visualize 2045, for the first time the TPB added text drawing attention to the TPB priorities and asking members to work towards those priorities. He said that that TPB staff does not believe that this draft language weakens the TPB intent; rather, it strengthens for the reason that the 2021 language referenced only the aspirational initiatives, climate goals and land use as priorities. He noted that the 2021 language left out three large TPB goals and vision documents, and the language for this plan update includes greenhouse gas reduction goals, land use, and aspirational initiatives and adds what had been left out. He stated that the synthesized TPB policy framework explicitly mentions the quantitative greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Lyn Erickson said that over the next several months, the TPB staff will focus on helping members work on their project lists. She said that TPB member agencies are revising their financial forecasts and they are looking at the project list that we just shared and facilitated meetings with TPB members and agencies will be scheduled in March. She said that public comment will be taken and shared with members over the next four months until June 30.

Lyn Erickson referred to the Item 7 presentation for additional information on the process schedule, public comment period, projects list, and instructional guide.

The board voted unanimously to approve the TPB's Technical Inputs Solicitation Document.

8. BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT FY 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Vice Chair James Walkinshaw introduced Item 8 as a review of the proposed work activities and budget for the next fiscal year starting on July 1. He stated that the TPB board will review the draft document and be asked to adopt the budget at the March meeting.

Lyn Erickson referred to the staff presentation and memo for Item 8. She announced that the TPB has an unconfirmed \$24.4 million in Federal Highway Administration PL and Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 funding allocated for the metropolitan planning organization process.

Lyn Erickson said that the TPB has ten core work activities that serve the region. She said that the budget includes new activities: transportation resiliency, new motor vehicle emissions budgets, ozone national ambient air quality standards, new data collection including transit onboard survey data. She said that other FY 2024 activities include coordinating regional planning for transit electrification, and climate change mitigation study follow-up.

Lyn Erickson said that the TPB staff plans to work with COG's Department of Environmental Programs to encourage implementation of climate change mitigation strategies that already have TPB's support. She said that another important data collection activity is the design and rollout of a new format for the regional household travel survey. She said that other plans include a multiyear process to facilitate regional coordination of future transit onboard surveys, and the systems performance, operations, and technology subcommittee will advise an inventory of traffic technologies.

Lyn Erickson noted that TPB staff intends to develop and implement a new regional active transportation bike count program as part of its travel monitoring activities, and an intercity bus and rail survey will be conducted to update a 2016 survey. She said that map updates include the National Capital Trail network map and the regional activity centers map.

Lyn Erickson reported that additional UPWP highlights of FY 2024 include a Community Leadership Institute session, regional travel trends analysis, and analyses of travel surveys including the regional travel survey, the Visualize 2045 public opinion survey, the employer survey, and others. She said that TPB staff will continue to support travel forecasting and mobile emissions planning and the development of the disaggregate activity based Gen3 travel demand model to be delivered to COG staff in fall of 2023.

Lyn Erickson noted that additional initiatives include continuation of the TPB technical assistance program, performance-based planning and programming, and updating the region's human service transportation coordinated plan.

Lyn Erickson requested that TPB members provide comments on the proposed FY 2024 UPWP and carryover funding by February 24 so that the board can take action in March.

Kelly Russell asked if the update to the regional activity centers map will allow for new activity centers to be created.

Kanti Srikanth replied that once the TPB's budget is approved, the TPB will begin to have a conversation on the nature and scope of the update. He said that the work will be led by the directors of planning and zoning offices within each jurisdiction and that once the work begins, the TPB will be regularly briefed and will have opportunity for comment.

Earl Lewis said that the electric vehicle (EV) initiative was mentioned as part of the presentation and Maryland DOT is looking to partner with other jurisdictions in the region regarding the regional EV structured deployment work group which is starting in mid-March.

9. BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT FY 2024 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM

Vice Chair James Walkinshaw introduced Nicholas Ramfos to present the proposed work activities and budget for the Commuter Connections Work Program for FY2024. James Walkinshaw said the board will be asked to adopt the budget and work activities at the March meeting.

Nicholas Ramfos referred to the meeting materials and explained that the FY2024 Commuter Connections Work Program and companion strategic plan define the role of the program. Referring to the slide presentation, he highlighted the map outlining the Commuter Connections coverage area and noted that commuters travel from as far as Richmond, Western Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Eastern Shore, and Delaware. He said that the Metropolitan Washington region ranks favorably for carpooling and transit use to other metropolitan areas in the United States. He added that the Commuter Connections program reduces 137,000 vehicle trips, over 2.5 million vehicle miles of travel, approximately a half ton of NO_x, and approximately a half ton of VOC daily.

Nick Ramfos shared Commuter Connection's role in the regional planning process as part of the congestion management process and its role supporting COG's regional air quality and climate goals. He noted that the Commuter Connections program, as well as transportation demand management, is referenced in Visualize 2045 and in the TPB's endorsed Aspirational Initiatives.

Referring to the presentation materials, Nick Ramfos provided information about the cost savings and effectiveness as a result of the program – about \$48,000 per ton of NO_x reduced and about \$63,000 per ton of VOC reduced.

He summarized the program elements included in the work plan and budget. He said the total budget is approximately \$7 million, which is about a 2% increase from last year's budget. He highlighted several new items included in the FY2024 budget such as a server migration and marketing campaign for the program's 50th anniversary. He added that the monitoring and evaluation area will publish several reports including the 2022 State of the Commute, draft TDM analysis report, an employer outreach customer satisfaction survey, and an impact analysis of the guaranteed home program in Baltimore.

He outlined the process to incorporate stakeholder input, and next steps. He said that the Technical Committee would be briefed on the program again on March 3, and the draft document will be presented to the TPB on March 15 for final approval. He said that the program will begin on July 1.

Vice Chair Walkinshaw called for any questions and thanked Nicholas Ramfos.

10. DOD OLDCC MILITARY INSTALLATION RESILIENCE PROGRAM IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION

Vice Chair Walkinshaw introduced the item from COG's Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director Jeff King. He said that the U.S. Department of Defense called for a Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) on surrounding installations which included some transportation-related recommendations.

11. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:01 P.M. The March 15 TPB meeting will be an In-person meeting.