



CHAPTER 3

REGIONAL POLICY

Visualize 2045 is based on federal transportation planning requirements and a comprehensive regional policy framework that influences and directs the TPB's work.

When agencies submit their projects for inclusion in the financially constrained element they must consider these regionally agreed upon policies. This policy framework touches many other parts of the plan as well, and serves as a guiding

force behind the aspirational element and other work that the TPB engages in.

Federal requirements define the legal process under which the plan was developed and adopted. Federal law also determines which projects were required to be included in the financially constrained element and all the elements that are required to be included in the plan.

TPB Policy Framework

The TPB policy framework is a culmination of a 20-year evolution that began with a visioning process in 1998. This framework includes comprehensive strategies that promote a strong regional economy and help improve quality of life for all residents.

The policy statements and documents that make up the framework encourage the region's transportation agencies to consider regional goals, priorities, and needs when developing and selecting projects to fund and implement. The policy framework consists of the TPB Vision, the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, the Region Forward vision adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), and the seven aspirational initiatives recently endorsed by the TPB.

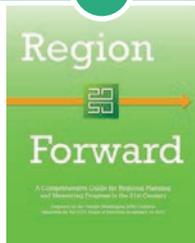
More information about the regional policy framework can be found at mwcog.org/TPBpolicy.

Evolution Of The TPB Policy Framework

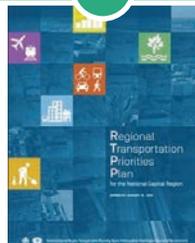
1998



2010



2014



2017



THE TPB VISION (1998)

The TPB Vision, adopted in 1998, provides a comprehensive set of policy goals, objectives, and strategies that guide transportation planning and investment decisions in the Washington region. The Vision was developed by TPB members and technical staff from throughout the region through a collaborative effort that involved consideration and inclusion of the transportation, land-use, environmental, and economic sectors.

TPB Vision Statement

“In the 21st Century, the Washington metropolitan region remains a vibrant world capital, with a transportation system that provides efficient movement of people and goods. This system promotes the region’s economy and environmental quality, and operates in an attractive and safe setting—it is a system that serves everyone. The system is fiscally sustainable, promotes areas of concentrated growth, manages both demand and capacity, employs the best technology, and joins rail, roadway, bus, air, water, pedestrian and bicycle facilities into a fully interconnected network.”

THE VISION GOALS

1. The Washington metropolitan region’s transportation system will provide reasonable access at reasonable cost to everyone in the region.
2. The Washington metropolitan region will develop, implement, and maintain an interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy throughout the entire region, including a healthy regional core and dynamic regional activity centers with a mix of jobs, housing and services in a walkable environment.
3. The Washington metropolitan region’s transportation system will give priority to management, performance, maintenance, and safety of all modes and facilities.
4. The Washington metropolitan region will use the best available technology to maximize system effectiveness.
5. The Washington metropolitan region will plan and develop a transportation system that enhances and protects the region’s natural environmental quality, cultural and historic resources, and communities.
6. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve better inter-jurisdictional coordination of transportation and land use planning.
7. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve an enhanced funding mechanism(s) for regional and local transportation system priorities that cannot be implemented with current and forecasted federal, state, and local funding.
8. The Washington metropolitan region will support options for international and inter-regional travel and commerce.

REGION FORWARD: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AND MEASURING PROGRESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY (2010)

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments developed Region Forward in 2010 to guide local and regional decision making. It spells out nine broad goal areas, one of which is transportation, and numerous objectives and targets for assessing progress toward achieving each of the goals.

Region Forward Goals that Guided Aspects of Visualize 2045

- We seek a broad range of public and private transportation choices for our region which maximizes accessibility and affordability to everyone and minimizes reliance upon single occupancy use of the automobile.
- We seek a transportation system that maximizes community connectivity and walkability, and minimizes ecological harm to the region and world beyond.
- We seek transit-oriented and mixed-use communities emerging in regional Activity Centers that will capture new employment and household growth.
- We seek a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, with substantial reductions from the built environment and transportation sector.
- We seek a diversified, stable, and competitive economy, with a wide range of employment opportunities and a focus on sustainable economic development.
- We seek to minimize economic disparities and enhance the prosperity of each jurisdiction and the region as a whole through balanced growth and access to high-quality jobs for everyone.

THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES PLAN (2014)

The TPB adopted the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) in January 2014. It focuses the region's attention on a handful of transportation priorities and strategies with the greatest potential to advance regional goals rooted in the TPB Vision. The strategies are meant to be "within reach" both financially and politically. The goals in the RTPP are frequently referenced in TPB planning activities, including the work of the Long-Range Plan Task Force (which shaped the aspirational element, see **Chapter 4** for more information) and the submission forms for projects in the financially constrained element of the plan. Pursuing the priorities outlined in this plan will lead to greater economic vitality and a higher quality of life for those that live in the metropolitan Washington region.

Priorities Identified in the RTPP

- 1. Meet Our Existing Obligations:** Funding for maintenance and state-of-good-repair needs should continue to be prioritized over system expansion.
- 2. Strengthen Public Confidence and Ensure Fairness:** Efforts to increase accountability and address the needs of historically transportation-disadvantaged populations should be considered in all stages of project planning, design, and implementation.
- 3. Move More People and Goods More Efficiently:** Improvements to the transportation system should seek to do more with less—to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and promote greater use of more efficient travel modes for both people and goods.

RTPP Goals

1. Provide a comprehensive range of transportation options
2. Promote a strong regional economy, including a healthy regional core and dynamic Activity Centers
3. Ensure adequate system maintenance, preservation, and safety
4. Maximize operational effectiveness and safety of the transportation system
5. Enhance environmental quality, and protect natural and cultural resources
6. Support inter-regional and international travel and commerce



ASPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES (2017)

In 2017 and 2018 the TPB identified seven initiatives that have potential to improve the performance of the region's transportation system compared to previously adopted long-range transportation plans. The projects, policies, and programs that make up these initiatives were identified based on their ability to make more progress toward achieving the goals laid out in previously adopted TPB and COG governing policy documents.

The Aspirational Initiatives are:

- Bring jobs and housing closer together
- Expand bus rapid transit and transitways
- Move more people on Metrorail
- Increase telecommuting and other options for commuting
- Expand the express highway network
- Improve walk and bike access to transit
- Complete the National Capital Trail

These seven initiatives serve double-duty for Visualize 2045: they provide policy guidance for this plan as well as future plans, and they also serve as concepts for projects, programs,

and policies, comprising the aspirational element of the plan (see [Chapter 4](#)). As the newest piece of the policy framework, the initiatives are meant to provide inspiration and guidance to regional leaders and transportation agencies that identify projects to be included in the financially constrained element of the plan. In future plan updates, the TPB would like to see more projects, programs and policies included in the financially constrained element of the plan that help fulfill these initiatives. By furthering these initiatives the region will continue to build upon a legacy of regional policies that bring the region closer to reaching its goals for an effective transportation system for all its residents.



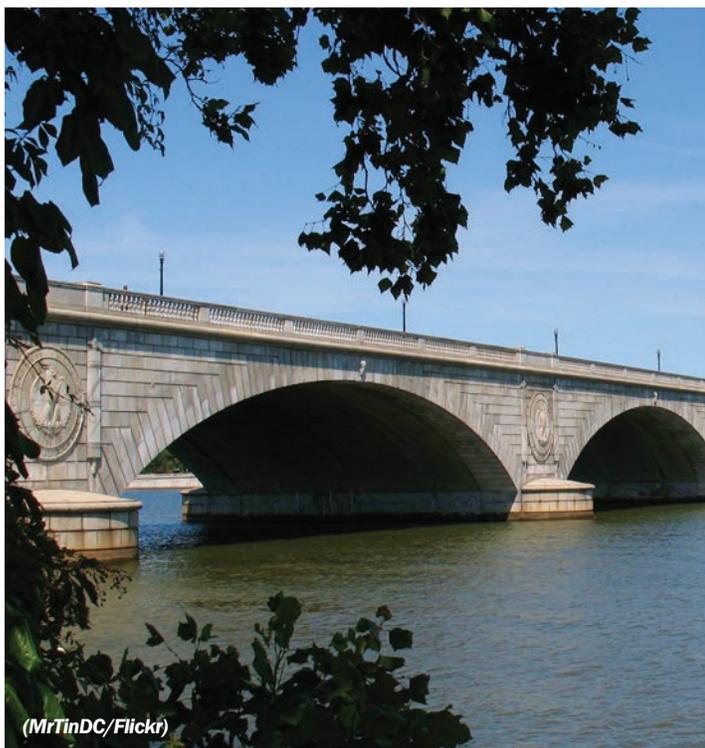
Federal Requirements

As a federally designated metropolitan planning organization, or MPO, the TPB's long-range transportation planning process, including the development and adoption of a long-range transportation plan, is governed by several federal requirements. These requirements must be met for the plan to be approved and for federal transportation dollars to continue flowing to the region. The newest federal surface transportation law is the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

MPOs must develop a regional long-range transportation plan that looks out at least 20 years into the future. The plan must include a policy element to guide the development and selection of projects. And it must include a detailed financial plan demonstrating that funding is "reasonably expected to be available" to build, operate, and maintain the transportation system it spells out. The plan and its various components must be updated at least once every four years.

Appendix K contains a checklist of federal requirements for MPO long-range transportation plans that Visualize 2045 fulfills. The checklist explains the requirements and points readers to locations in the plan document to see where these requirements are fulfilled.

Some highlights of requirements for an MPO's long-range transportation plan are described below.



Consideration of the Federal Planning Factors

In addition to considering regional policies when developing Visualize 2045, the submitting agencies were required to consider ten federal planning factors in developing the plan. These planning factors are referenced at various points throughout Visualize 2045, where relevant. The planning factors are:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation (New under the FAST Act)
- Enhance travel and tourism (New under the FAST Act)

Responding to New Planning Factors

The last two planning factors are new for this update of the long-range transportation plan: "improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation" and "enhance travel and tourism." Visualize 2045 addresses these planning factors in **Chapter 7** and explains how the TPB is working to contribute to and help coordinate regional resiliency and reliability planning efforts and regional travel and tourism planning efforts.

New Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) Requirements

The most recent federal transportation authorization requires that states and MPOs “transition to a performance-driven, outcome-based program that provides for a greater level of transparency and accountability, improved project decision-making, and more efficient investment of Federal transportation funds.” To accomplish this, the PBPP process ties the funding of projects and programs to improving measured performance and achieving targets set for future performance. An overview of how the region is working toward achieving the PBPP goals can be found in [Chapter 6](#).

Non-Discrimination and Equity

Federal guidance stipulates that the MPO’s long-range transportation plan must not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority populations and individuals with low incomes. COG’s Title VI Plan (encompassing TPB) provides necessary policies and practices to ensure non-discrimination, available at mwkog.org/TitleVI. Other TPB non-discrimination and equity elements are described in the “Equity and Inclusion” portion of [Chapter 7](#).

Public Participation

Federal law requires MPOs to engage users of all transportation modes who reside, have an interest, or do business in an area affected by transportation decisions. The fundamental objective of involving the public is to ensure that the concerns and issues of everyone with a stake in transportation decisions are included in the development of the policies, programs, and projects being proposed in their communities. To encourage participation, the MPO must develop a participation plan, make public information available in ways that are accessible and understandable by all participants, and encourage the participation of persons underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income or minority households and the elderly. Visualize 2045’s public participation efforts are described in [Chapter 8](#) and appendices to this plan summarize distinct public participation activities that helped shape the plan.

