

TPB Comment Period

Summary of Comments and Responses

Stacy Cook

TPB Transportation Planner

Transportation Planning Board

May 19, 2021

Agenda Item #10

visualize
2045 A long-range
transportation plan
for the National
Capital Region



(Cook/TPB)

Agenda Item #10

- Brief Review of Work Session
- Purpose of Comment Period and this Agenda Item
- Comment Period Notice
- Comments Received by Number
- Summary review of Comment Period Packet
 - Comment/Response Summary Memorandum
 - Appendix A: Letters Received and Comment Compilation
 - Appendix B: TPB April Work Session Summary and attachment
 - Appendix C: Conformity Analysis Tables revised with technical corrections received during inter-agency review
- Next Steps

Purpose of Comment Period

- Not federally required, TPB conducts comment period to:
 - **provide the TPB members with information** to support their action on projects proposed to be included in the air quality conformity analysis for the Visualize 2045 update and TIP *
 - engage and receive comments from the public
 - provide opportunity for technical corrections to the inputs

**Schedule for this plan update extended to provide TPB members additional time to consider comments and clarifications for consideration prior to taking action on conformity inputs.*

2021 Comment Period - Notice

- The TPB staff advertised the public comment period via:
 - the TPB's public comment email distribution list
 - social media
 - TPB News
 - Newspaper advertisements:
 - Washington Post, Washington Hispanic, and the Afro-American Newspapers
- Staff shared information about the public comment period with the TPB's Technical, Community Advisory, and the Access for All Advisory Committees
- Materials and comment form were available on the TPB comment page: (mwcog.org/tpbcomment)

Conducted from
April 2 – May 3

Comments Received – By Number

Platforms for commenting	Number of Comments Received by Platform
Sending email to tpbcomment@mwkog.org	163
Writing to the TPB Chair at TPB	0
Using the form online at mwkog.org/tpbcomment	65
Calling the TPB Public Comment Line at 202-962-3262 and leaving a 3-minute voice mail.	1

Summary review of Comment Period Packet

Packet Content:

- Comment/Response Summary Memorandum
- Appendix A: Letters Received and Comment Compilation (206 total including letters)
- Appendix B: TPB April Work Session Summary and attachment
- Appendix C: Conformity Analysis Tables revised with technical corrections received during inter-agency review

Comment Types

- General – many comments addressed numerous themes (>180)
- Project Specific – sponsoring agencies responded (>20)

Overarching Comment: Themes & Topics

- Topic 1: The draft project list does not meet the region's climate goals [145 Comments]
- Topic 2: Opposition to highway expansion and road widening [24 comments]
- Topic 3: Prioritize investments in sustainable transportation options [19 comments]
- Topic 4: Strategic road projects will bring balance to the plan and benefits during/post pandemic [6 comments]
- Topic 5: Equity and Climate Change [5 comments]

Public Comment Themes

- Theme 1: The draft project list does not meet the region's climate goals [145 Comments]
 - Example: *“This plan does not pursue the region's goal of reducing climate emissions, shamefully reverting to the status quo of driver-oriented projects that will not in the long term reduce traffic and, worse, will lead to increased emissions. The Council of Governments adopted a climate plan in 2020, and the TPB should reflect those goal by focusing on public transit and active transportation, not spending billions to build and widen roadways serving single-occupancy vehicles.”*

Public Comment Themes

- Theme 2: Opposition to highway expansion and road widening [24 Comments]
 - Example: *“The plan calls for funding numerous highway projects, which will only fuel sprawl development and increase pollution while failing to reduce traffic long-term. It's also disappointing that the plan failed to commit to regional climate targets, account for increased telecommuting, or consider adopted goals to focus jobs and housing in activity centers. I hope that the plan will instead invest more into bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit projects that can both address long-term traffic concerns and help us reduce transportation emissions. As someone in my early 20s, I will live with the disastrous consequences of climate change unless we act now. Please change the plan to address this reality.”*

Public Comment Themes

- Topic 3: Prioritize investments in sustainable transportation options [19 comments]
 - Example: *“A smart growth/climate-friendly network would focus on increasing accessibility to jobs, housing, and services in the region in ways that make our region more equitable, livable, and sustainable. This means reducing the need to drive by creating walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities and addressing the east-west jobs divide, affordable housing, and investments in walking, biking, and transit. These strategies are already being successfully implemented in some parts of our region, and they provide many benefits (equity, safety, health, livability, economic) in addition to significantly reducing GHG emissions.”*

Public Comment Themes

- Topic 4: Strategic road projects will bring balance to the plan and benefits during/post pandemic [6 comments]
 - Example: *“Removing the limited, strategic roadway improvements currently in Visualize 2045 will do little to reduce GHG or VMT. That is because VMT alone is a poor metric for evaluating GHG emission reductions. In fact, VMT is more closely tied to population growth than roadway improvements. The reality is that strategic roadway improvements can reduce carbon emissions even though there is a slight increase in VMT. In the 2016 Multi-Sector Work Group (MSWG) study evaluating different emissions reduction strategies, improving roadway operational efficiency provided greater GHG reduction benefits than reducing transit fares, travel times, and headways combined. However, if you only looked at VMT you would conclude the exact opposite.*
In fact, failing to make these important improvements could have the reverse impact of increasing congestion and associated emissions, especially if no action is taken to significantly increase dense, mix-use development in regional activity centers served by high-capacity transit.”

Public Comment Themes

- Topic 5: Equity and Climate Change [5 comments]
 - Example: *“This plan is set up to fail future generations and the region with a lack of response to climate change impacts. Expanding roadways only will bring more single occupant internal combustion engines to our roadways, increasing the heat emergency effects of summer (and starting to impact spring and fall already) and further contributing to the emissions of our area. Only conversion of existing lanes to HOV should be utilized in this plan, with a greater focus on smart access to multimodal options. The addition of toll roads once again increases the inequity in our country allowing the rich to throw some money at a problem, since their time is viewed as more valuable. How does this support vulnerable and low-income communities that often have the longest commute times to minimum wage jobs? The federal government is getting serious about emission reduction targets by 2030, it is past time that this plan be reevaluated, and course corrected.”*

Comments on Specific Projects

Public comments on specific projects that are existing or proposed as technical inputs:

- A. Maryland Traffic Relief Plan I-270/I-495 (7)
- B. MD-97 Georgia Avenue, MD83 Mid-County Highway extension and Montrose Expressway (2)
- C. Maryland Bus Rapid Transit Projects) (2)
- D. Governor Harry Nice Bridge (1)
- E. US Route 15 (3)
- F. Northstar Boulevard (1)
- G. Route 28 corridor /Manassas Bypass (2)
- H. Long Bridge Rail (1)
- I. VRE 3rd and 4th Track projects (1)
- J. Metro Silver Line (1)
- K. Crystal City Transitway (1)
- L. Other Comments

Air Quality Conformity Tables - updated

- Updated with technical corrections received during inter-agency review
- Pink highlights reflect technical corrections

2022 Update to VISUALIZE 2045 AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY NETWORK INPUTS
(highway)

DRAFT 5/12/2021

PIT Project ID	Con ID	Project ID	Agency ID	Improvement	Facility	From	To	Facility		Lanes		Completion Date
								Fr	To	Fr	To	
3476 CE1462	206	MS2F	MO886 1	Widen	MD 28 Norbeck Road	MD 97	MD 182	2	2	2	2-4	2045
3476 CE1462	925	NRS	MO886	Reconstruct	MD 28 Norbeck Road	MD 182	Norwood Road	2	2	4	4	2045
3476 CE1462	926	NRS	MO886	Reconstruct	MD 198	Norwood Road	MD 650	2	2	2	2	2045
3476 CE1462	927	NRS	MO886	Reconstruct	MD 198	MD 650	Old Columbia Pike	2	2	2	2	2045
3476 CE1462	928	NRS	MO886	Reconstruct	MD 198	Old Columbia Pike	US 29A	2	2	4	4	2045
3476 CE1462	929	NRS	MO886	Reconstruct	MD 198	US 29A	I 95	2	2	4	4	2045
3106	137	MP12C	MO746 1	Construct	MD 97 Brookeville Bypass	Gold Mine Road	North of Brookville	0	2	0	2	2021
CE2618	931	NRS	MO2241	Widen-Reconstruct	MD 97	MD 390	MD 192 / Forest Glen Road	2	2	6/7	7/8 6/7	2025 2030
CE1211	392	NRS	MO852 1	Upgrade	MD 97 Georgia Avenue Interchange	at MD 28 Norbeck Road		2	2	6	6	2035
	135	NRS	MO854 1	Upgrade	MD 97 Georgia Avenue Interchange	at Randolph Road		2	2	6	6	2018
CE1203	115	MS32		Widen-Reconstruct	MD 117 Clopper Road	I270	Metropolitan Grove Road	2	2	2/4	4	2030
CE1203	921	NRS		Reconstruct	MD 117 Clopper Road	Metropolitan Grove Road	West of Game Preserve Road	3	3	2/4	2 2/4 3	2030 2035

Next Steps

- Materials available for review to support board action
- Advise TPB staff if further response to comments is needed

Stacy M. Cook

TPB Transportation Planner

(202) 962-3335

scook@mwkog.org

mwkog.org/TPB

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street NE,
Suite 300

Washington, DC 20002