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**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

July 16, 2025  
In-Person Meeting

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Rebecca Schwartzman – DC Office of Planning  
Kelly Russell – City of Frederick  
Monique Ashton – City of Rockville  
Walter Alcorn – Fairfax County  
Corey Pitts – Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Cristina Henderson – District of Columbia  
Charles Allen – District of Columbia  
Neil Harris – City of Gaithersburg  
James Walkinshaw - TPB Chair, Fairfax County  
Marc Korman – Maryland State Delegate  
Geoff Anderson – Maryland Department of Transportation  
Ashley Hutson – City of Manassas  
Dan Koenig - Federal Transportation Administration  
Maria Sinner – Virginia Department of Transportation  
Michael Weil – National Capital Planning Commission

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES ONLINE**

Allison Davis – WMATA  
Alanna Mensing – City of Manassas Park  
Amy Wesolek – City of Takoma Park  
Matt Frumin – District of Columbia  
Cane Aguirre – City of Alexandria  
Deshundra Jefferson – Prince William County  
Dan Malouff – Arlington County  
David Snyder – City of Falls Church  
Eric Olson – Prince George's County  
Janine Ashe – Federal Highway Administration  
Jason Groth – Charles County  
Kari Snyder – MDOT  
Kristen Weaver – City of Greenbelt  
Marilyn Balcombe – Montgomery County  
Mark Mishler – Frederick County  
Rob Donaldson – Loudoun County  
Sandra Marks – DDOT  
Jennifer B. Boysko – Virginia Senator  
Sonia Vasquez Luna – City of Manassas  
Susan Cunningham – Arlington County  
Tom Peterson – City of Fairfax  
Mark Phillips – WMATA  
Victor Weissberg – Prince George's County

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## MWCOG STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Lyn Erickson  
Kanti Srikanth  
Feng Xie  
Mark Moran  
Tim Canan  
Laura Bachle  
Sergio Ritacco  
Katherine Rainone  
Rachel Beyerle  
Andrew Austin  
Pierre Gaunard  
Cristina Finch  
Amanda Lau  
Janie Nham  
Eric Randall  
Ian Newman  
Tom Harrington  
Dusan Vuksan  
Daniel Sheehan  
Jessica Storck  
Robert D'Abadie  
Renee Ritchey  
Sara Brown  
Tom Harrington  
Jamie Bufkin  
Ken Joh  
Mike Farrell  
Vicki Caudullo  
Delanna Thomas  
Greg Goodwin  
Deborah Etheridge  
Daniel Papiernik – Community Advisory Committee Chair  
Bill Orleans – public  
Angel Deem – VDOT  
Allison Greenday – Deshundra Jefferson Legislative Aide  
Michelle Shropshire – VDOT  
Vahid Moshtagh – VDOT

### **1. PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES, MEMBER ROLL CALL, AND PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Chair James Walkinshaw called the meeting to order. He provided instructions for the hybrid 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.

Chair Walkinshaw announced the public comment section of the meeting.

Janet Gallant, Co-coordinator of Don't Widen 270, said that the two reasons to say no to the southside toll lanes is because you won't know the cost of enabling the Blue Line, the project's secondary roads,

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whether toll revenues would be shared, the full substance of the environmental assessment or how less harmful alternatives would've compared. She said the second reason to say no, is that this project will significantly diminish the ability of regional officials to make smart choices as VDOT and its contractor will, in effect, control the future of the Blue Line. She ended by stating that the only responsible vote in October is no.

Katrena Moody said that during the course of the meetings that were held with VDOT, D.C. was omitted. She said that to commute in Virginia, it costs more than driving in the Jersey Turnpike, 200 miles for \$20. She said by saying you pay to utilize a main highway, and at the same time, in Virginia, you pay to get off on an exit off of that main highway that you just paid a fee to utilize.

Barbara Coufall from Citizens Against Beltway Expansion. She said that TPB's analysis shows that the southside lanes would shift congestion east from Virginia to Maryland during rush hour. She continued by saying that two years after opening toll lanes between Springfield and Old Dominion Drive, Virginia reported that the congestion caused by the merging of toll lane traffic into the general lanes at Old Dominion Drive caused a two-and-a-half-mile backup in the general lanes during evening rush hour.

Ross Capan said that he has lived in Montgomery County for 43 years and has been president of the Wingate Citizens Association. He said to please block VDOT's southside express lanes as they would worsen beltway congestion in Prince George's County as bottlenecks develop where toll lanes end. He ended by saying that with federal government turning its back on environmental concerns, it's even more important for governments at other levels to observe those concerns and not engage in controversial highway construction.

Lindsey Mendelson, Maryland Sierra Club, said that Sierra Club strongly urges the Board to not include the Southside Project as part of Visualize 2050. She said that the air quality analysis presents findings that are based on flawed and outdated modeling techniques. She said it underestimates induced vehicle miles traveled, and it does not account for particulate matter from tires and brakes. She said that if we continue to build projects like these, we're going to make air quality worse.

Stewart Schwartz from Coalition for Smarter Growth said that the Visualize 2050 air quality modeling that you have before you has not provided the useful information for helping you to decide whether or not to move forward. He said that from the beginning VDOT's study has been fatally flawed by a conclusions-first approach, defining a purpose and need as extending express toll lanes, which forecloses other alternatives. He said that this project is not ready for inclusion in the regional plan.

Tina Slater from Silver Spring, Maryland said that she believes that the 495 Southside Project has too many flaws and too many unanswered questions. She said that space on the bridge should be preserved for the Blue Line. She urged the board to reject the 495 southside toll lanes.

Patricia Monroe, who lives in the Fort Washington/Oxon Hill area, asked the board not to approve the VDOT expansion across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge for the following reasons: transparency of project, congestion, and safety and environment. She said that many drivers are being priced out of using toll lanes. Better alternatives like rail and transit options are more sustainable, cost effective, climate friendly, and a win-win for all commuters.

Elliott Levine, a resident of Montgomery County, urged the TPB to reject the toll lanes project when you vote on it in September because the toll lanes will worsen beltway congestion in Prince George's County, the toll lanes will block a future extension of Metro Rail over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and VDOT failed to study alternatives to toll lanes.

Gary Hodge said that the TPB should reject VDOT's proposed extension of beltway toll lanes into

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Maryland as Maryland commuters don't want to be exploited by toll-road profiteers, held hostage, and manipulated into paying high tolls on highways that fail to deliver on the promise of congestion relief.

Mark Pierzchala said that the TPB is going to decide to include or exclude the project in Visualize before knowing the impacts on local lanes. He said that an insufficient study of alternatives to tolling. He said that there are negative impacts that have always been overlooked like climate change. He said that there are never enough lanes and that tolls will have a negative commuting impact on the those that can't afford them.

Sharon Lawrence, a resident of Oxon Hill, said that Maryland 210 is designated the most dangerous highway in Maryland with over 80,000 vehicles traveled daily, with some exceeding speeds of 155 miles per hour. She said that faster equals speed, speed equals aggressive driving, which ultimately and often does result in accidents.

Jason Stanford, representing the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, said that he'd like to remind everyone that the primary purpose of this process is to demonstrate that our region's transportation projects will not adversely impact our federal air quality requirements. He said that TPB's analysis shows that the Southside Express Lanes Project will have no negative impact on our air quality and shows that the southside express lanes will increase the number of jobs accessible region-wide via 45-minute drive. He said that those are more than 10,000 jobs on average. He urged the board to include the Southside Express Lanes.

Richard Parsons said his three main points are that the Visualize 2050 plan doesn't invest enough in our region's road network, the plan only includes a 3 percent in roadway lane miles by 2050. He said that is not enough to keep pace with the 24 percent increase in population. He said that the vast majority of funding in this plan goes to expanding transit, but your own TPB modeling shows these investments are not enough to reduce congestion and the operating costs may be unsustainable. Lastly, he said that adding the southside express lanes to this plan, has nothing to do with air quality.

Miguel Moravec, representing the Rocky Mountain Institute, said that in the engineering profession they say that all models are wrong, but some are useful. He said that TPB's modeling is both wrong and not useful. He said that TPB says the expressway will not cause appreciable increase in traffic or emissions, nor will it affect land use or mode choice, however, per US DOT's recent report, *Improved Travel Demand Modeling*, these assumptions and findings are simply not realistic. He said that US DOT recommends elasticity-based approaches to predict highway traffic impacts. He said that the RMI SHIFT calculator that they use demonstrate that adding 41 urban lane miles to the Washington Metro area will substantially increase local traffic by 25,000 additional cars per year per their own estimates and hundreds of millions of additional VMTs and emissions. He said that TPB's assumptions go against US DOT's best practices and should be revisited.

Lyn Erickson summarized the comments. She said that there were 423 comments submitted via email between noon Tuesday, June 17 and noon Tuesday, July 15. She said that most of the comments received expressed support for or opposition to the Virginia I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project. She said that there was one comment in support of through-running services between Virginia Railway Express trains and MARC trains, to enhance regional connectivity. She said that of the seven letters received, three were from speakers the board just heard from. She said she also received letters from the Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Coalition for Smarter Growth. She said that there was also an email campaign, including 415 emails, generated from email-writing software that included urging the TPB to reject the currently proposed I-495 Express Lane Project and content urging the TPB to include the proposed project in Visualize 2050. Lyn Erickson said that all these comments and four-page summary are found on the TPB meeting page.

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## **2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 18, 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Walkinshaw moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Neil Harris. The motion was approved.

## **3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

TPB Technical Committee Chair Victor Weissberg said that the Technical Committee met on July 2. He said that two items were reviewed for inclusion on the TPB's July agenda. These items were: 1) FY 2026 Maryland Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program Project Approvals, and 2) Visualize 2050 Finalization of Project Inputs for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. He said that there was one informational item: 1) 2024 State of Public Transportation Report.

There were no follow-up questions.

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

TPB Community Advisory Committee Chair Daniel Papiernik said that the CAC met virtually on July 10. He said the group focused on obtaining feedback and collective consensus on the DMVMoves initiatives. He said that the CAC is preparing a summary of the CAC's feedback and recommendations to share with the Community Partners Advisory Group in September.

There were no follow-up questions.

Laura Bachle wasn't able to provide a briefing on the Access for All Committee. Lyn Erickson said if there are any questions about the Access for All Committee to let TPB staff know.

## **5. STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR**

Kanti Srikanth shared the revised schedule for approving the remaining projects for Visualize 2050 air-quality conformity. He said that this is important because the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project in Visualize 2050 vote, which was previously planned for September 17, 2025, is being deferred to October 15, 2025. He said that since that action had previously been scheduled, TPB staff has learned that several board members had unavoidable conflicts to participate in the September 17 meeting, and the decision was made in the Steering Committee to defer the action to October. He said that there are no time-sensitive or urgent matters to be brought up to the Board in September, so the September meeting is cancelled. He said that even with these timeline changes the TPB will still be on schedule to adopt Visualize 2050 at its December 17 meeting.

Eric Olson thanked TPB staff for working with everyone to reschedule the TPB meeting.

## **6. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Chair Walkinshaw stated that most of the meeting will be devoted to one outstanding action the Board must take with respect to what projects will be included in the updated Long-Range Transportation Plan or Visualize 2050. He said that outstanding action is VDOT's proposal to include express lanes on the southside of I-495 and across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge in Visualize 2050. He said that staff will be briefing the board on the results of two scenarios from the regional air quality

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conformity analysis and the system-level performance analysis that we can expect to be delivered by all of the projects proposed for inclusion in Visualize 2050, one scenario with the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project, and the other without the project. He said that this will be followed by VDOT's presentation on the more detailed project-level analysis of the express lanes project. He continued by saying that the meeting today is an opportunity for board members to receive the results of the sets of analyses, ask questions of TPB staff and VDOT in preparation to vote on VDOT's request to include the project in Visualize 2050 in our October meeting.

Chair Walkinshaw stated that the board is not taking any action on the project today. He said that Board members will have the summer and the month of September to digest what is heard today and ask for additional information that you might need before voting in October. He said that after today's meeting there will be time to send the remaining questions that weren't discussed to Kanti Srikanth for answers. He said staff will compile those questions, collect responses, and share them with all of us before the October Board meeting.

Chair Walkinshaw shared that this might be his last meeting as a member of TPB and as chair. He thanked all the members and staff and said he enjoyed almost every minute of the five years he has served at the Transportation Planning Board. He said that in any role that he is in he will not be a stranger and will continue to support TPB's work in any way that he can.

## **7. VISUALIZE 2050 FINALIZATION OF PROJECT INPUTS FOR THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS AND A PRESENTATION FROM VDOT ON THE I-495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES PROJECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

Cristina Finch announced that the staff presentation would share information to assist the TPB to prepare for a fall vote to finalize the project inputs for the Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-FY 2029 TIP and air quality conformity analysis. She said that following the TPB's staff presentation, Michelle Shropshire, Virginia DOT Megaprojects Director, would present project-specific information.

Cristina Finch reviewed the steps in the Visualize 2050 plan's development from June 2021 through June 2024.

Cristina Finch said that the Round 10 Cooperative Forecast served as a major input to TPB's technical analyses. She stated that by 2050, the population will grow by 1,250,000 people consisting of more than half a million households and 800,000 more jobs.

Cristina Finch said that the TPB has already approved over 120 highway-capacity-related projects for inclusion in the air quality conformity analysis. She said that the projects will add approximately three percent or 530 more lane miles. She said of the additional lane miles, about 239 will be along arterials (2 percent increase), and 291 lane miles (8 percent increase) will be added to freeways and expressways that include interstate and other major roadways. She said that of the 291, 81 will be HOT express lane miles, where vehicles with three or more people can use the lanes for free,

Cristina Finch said that, if approved by the TPB, the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) will add another one percent to new freeway and expressway lane miles with 41 more HOT three-plus express lane miles next to the free general-purpose lanes on I-495. She said that the TPB has already approved over 25 transit capacity-related projects for the conformity analysis, which will increase high-capacity transit lane miles by more than 30 percent beyond what the region has today. She said that the transit projects include 18 light rail/streetcar and 79 bus rapid transit lane miles and that most of these projects will be completed by 2030.

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Cristina Finch said that what remains to be approved before the TPB staff can finalize draft documents is whether to include the I-495 SEL project. She said that the I-495 SEL study is currently included in Visualize 2045, and during the Visualize 2050 zero-based budgeting exercise, VDOT submitted the full construction project, estimated at \$2 billion, for inclusion in Visualize 2050. She said that the full construction project consists of two HOT three-plus express lanes in each direction between the Springfield Interchange and Maryland 210 and is scheduled for completion in 2031.

Cristina Finch said that as part of the project, a new bus route is planned between the Branch Avenue Metro Station and Tysons Corner. She said that bicycle and pedestrian connections are also included. She said that the TPB has received a great number of comments advocating both for and against the project. She said that VDOT has held their own opportunities for comment as part of the NEPA process.

Rob d'Abadie said that he would continue the technical discussion focusing on the air quality conformity analysis along with other emissions analyzed as part of the TPB's ongoing review of air quality issues in the region. He said that of the six criteria air pollutants defined in the Clean Air Act, the region only has conformity requirements remaining for ground-level ozone, and the conformity analysis must be completed in order for the long-range plan to ultimately be approved.

Rob d'Abadie said that the TPB compares the results of the total emissions generated in the entire region to emissions budgets established in the air quality maintenance plan. He presented a graphic showing the ozone design values for the region, which are compared to the standards to show whether or not the region is attaining the standard. He said that shows that the region is currently attaining the 2008 National Ambient Air quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone.

Rob d'Abadie said that a maintenance plan was developed, and in that maintenance plan, budgets were established that will be used for the conformity determination. He stated that the region has also attained the newer 2015 air quality standards and that the EPA has EPA granted the TPB a Clean Data Determination. He said that while the TPB has attained the standard, the region has not been redesignated as attainment for the standard, which requires additional analysis in the coming year.

Rob D'Abadie said that the TPB will develop other budgets further down the line. He said that ozone is a result of two pollutants that vehicles produce, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). He said that these combine in sunlight to form ground-level ozone, and as a result, emissions budgets are in terms of VOCs and NOx, not in terms of ozone directly.

Rob d'Abadie said that the air quality analysis was conducted twice, with and without the SEL lanes. He said that in both instances, the Visualize 2050 plan, with and without the SEL, will meet the air quality conformity standards. He said that what that means is that the mobile emissions for VOCs and NOx do fall below the established budgets. He said that the TPB discovered that the total emission results with and without the SEL are identical. He said that this is not to infer that the project has no impact, just that from a regional air quality perspective, the increases and decreases simply balanced each other out.

Rob d'Abadie said that the results are below both the 2025 and the 2030 budgets, which means that the region will pass conformity. He said that the long-range plan will meet the conformity requirements with or without the SEL.

Rob d'Abadie said that the TPB analyzes other regional emissions in addition to those required for clean air conformity. He said that is for information and for planning purposes. He said that the region no longer has conformity requirements for particulate matters but continues to analyze and monitor this pollutant and has noticed that there has been a 28 percent decrease in PM 2.5 emissions comparing today to 2050. He said that there is a very small difference with and without the SEL when it comes to

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PM 2.5 emissions, and the difference is only 0.1 percent. He said the results are slightly lower with the SEL in place.

Rob d'Abadie said that there are no federal standards for greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and therefore, no GHG conformity requirements. He said that the TPB does show a 37 percent decrease in per capita emissions between today and 2050. He said that the TPB saw the same results both with and without the SEL. He said that the PM 2.5 inventory numbers show, starting in 2040, ever-so-slightly lower emissions with the SEL. He said that the difference is so small that it would not be considered meaningful and that emissions start to increase in years starting in 2045.

Rob d'Abadie said that the reason for the particulate emissions decreases is due to vehicle standards. He said that as the fleet turns over by 2045, clean vehicles replace dirty vehicles; however, vehicle miles are increasing so starting in 2040, the VMT increase starts to overwhelm the benefits of fleet turnover. He said that the analysis shows a general decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. He stated that the increased fuel economy standards affect the reduction in greenhouse gases; however, as the fleet turns over and VMT increases, the effect lessens.

Sergio Ritacco presented the technical analysis on future system performance. He said that Visualize 2050 performance analysis considers how well the anticipated transportation system will accommodate current and forecasted travel demand on the region's transportation system.

Sergio Ritacco said that the travel demand model relies on regional population and job forecasts from COG's cooperative forecast process and the future transportation system. He stated that this information is fed into the TPB's travel demand model and is guided by information on existing travel patterns from the TPB's travel survey. He said that TPB staff found that many of the measures of mobility, accessibility, congestion, and delay are not appreciably different with or without the I-496 Southside Express Lanes Project. He said that instances where the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project may have an impact in 2050 are noted in the analysis.

Sergio Ritacco said that the TPB is not concluding that the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project does not have an appreciable impact within parts of the region, but the geographic scope of the TPB planning area and the methodology tailored for examining the long-range impact of Visualize 2050 is less suited for identifying the impact of a single project.

Sergio Ritacco said that by 2050, population and job forecasts predict the region will add 21 percent more people (1.25 million individuals), and 24 percent or an additional 800,000 jobs. He said that over the same time period, the transportation system will grow by a three percent or 551 increase in roadway lane miles. He stated that the toll lane mile system will increase between 16 and 23 percent depending on the inclusion of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project. He stated that high-capacity transit will grow an additional 31 percent.

Sergio Ritacco said that by 2050, an increased share of people and jobs inside regional activity centers and close to high-capacity transit is forecasted, and three percent of all people will reside inside regional activity centers, which is a five percent increase. He stated that there will be a 10 percent increase in the number of people close to high-capacity transit. He said that 63 percent of the region's jobs are within regional activity centers, and a modest one percent increase is expected by 2050.

Sergio Ritacco said that new high-capacity transit services and jobs forecast close to high-capacity transit means that 46 percent of all jobs in the region, and eight percent increase over today, will be near high-capacity transit. He said that the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project does not have an appreciable impact on the results.



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Sergio Ritacco said that access to jobs is measured as the average number of jobs a commuter can reach in the morning rush hours within 45 minutes. He stated that by 2050, there is a projected decline in total jobs accessible when driving and an increase when taking transit, creating a greater demand on the region's roadways. He said that with the I-495 SEL project included, the decline in job access is four percent, and without the I-495 SEL project, the decline is five percent by 2050.

Sergio Ritacco said that, regionally, the I-495 SEL project has an impact on regional job access, but with macro-level trends still present. He said that as more transit comes online and forecasts expect more people and jobs in close proximity to new and existing high-capacity transit, the region can expect a 16 percent increase in job access by 2050. He said that total daily vehicle hours of delay will increase 67 percent with the I-495 SEL project and 70 percent without the project. He said that average minutes of delay per trip increases to 44 percent with the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Project and 46 percent without the project.

Sergio Ritacco said that congestion, for the purposes of the analysis, is defined as the forecasted amount of vehicles on a roadway compared to the amount of vehicles a particular roadway can handle during morning commute on general-purpose freeways and expressways. He said that the TPB expects congestion increases for a large portion of the roadways outside the I-495 SEL project area. He stated that regionally, congestion levels on general-purpose lanes decline compared to not including the project but are not wholly eliminated. He said that areas outside but close to the I-495 SEL project area are impacted, with some lanes experiencing greater congestion, likely due to increasing vehicle volume of auto traveling.

Sergio Ritacco said that the average person will be driving five percent less in 2050 than they do today. He stated that this decline can include people who are making shorter trips due to jobs and housing being in closer proximity, using non-auto-based modes, and changes to travel behavior due to the impact of congestion and delay. He stated that the I-495 SEL project has no appreciable impact on the results of this measure.

Sergio stated that the share of trips, work and all-purpose, taken on non-single-occupancy-vehicle modes, are forecasted to increase at rates greater than single-occupancy travel by 2050 and that by 2050, more than 62 percent of trips will be taken on non-SOV modes compared to 59 percent today. He said that 43 percent of commuter trips will be taken on non-SOV modes by 2050 compared to 40 percent today. He stated that the I-495 SEL project does not have an appreciable impact of the results of this measure at a regional level.

Cristina Finch said that the TPB's regional analyses show that given future land-use changes and almost 150 other regionally significant highway and transit projects modeled, the impact of one project is not going to substantially alter the regional outcomes for future performance measures. She stated that the TPB's choice to move forward with constructing the I-495 SEL Project is like any other single major investment and cannot be based solely on future regional air quality or system performance metrics.

Cristina Finch stated that the TPB will vote on October 15 if the 495 SEL Project will be included in the National Capital Region's transportation plan and its air quality conformity analysis. She said that the \$2 billion I-495 SEL Project will affect the region's anticipated revenues and expenditures, accounted for in the financial plan. She stated that if the project is voted in, the \$2 billion comes with it, but if the project is voted out, the \$2 billion will be removed from the financial plan for both the revenues and expenditures. She said that this does not mean that \$2 billion will then be available for funding other projects.

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Monique Ashton said that in the Q&A, there is an assumption related to vehicular emissions used in the regional air quality conformity analysis that conformed to the EPA's mobile emissions MOVES model. She asked whether there is additional thought, given that the EV tax credits and some of the green credits have been removed or planned to be removed in the future, how that will impact on the TPB emissions analysis?

Kanti Srikanth stated that the air quality emissions calculations are derived from the EPA-approved MOVES model which currently reflects a certain degree of EV adoption nationwide based on greenhouse gas emissions and CAFE standard rules that the federal government has already enacted. He said that the current model that EPA provided reflects that a certain proportion of the fleet will be EV by 2032. He said that it is not clear the extent the assumed proportion of the EV vehicles in the model depend on the \$7,500 federal credit or the assumed federal funding for building the EV-charging infrastructure.

Kanti Srikanth said that it is reasonable to assume when the model was developed four-plus years ago that EPA was going by what was enacted as law. He stated that should those change, it is expected that the EPA will release an updated model, and when that happens, in the next round of air quality conformity analysis, the TPB will be able to reflect the new realities of the change in the adoption of EV vehicles. He said that as of now, the TPB can say that this analysis complies with what is on the books.

Walter Alcorn said that the board heard criticism of the model as it relates to elasticity during the public comment. He asked whether someone could address that in terms of potential deficiencies in the model.

Kanti Srikanth said that there are two models—one is the travel demand model which uses the projected growth in population, jobs, and households, and where that growth is happening. He said that the TPB receives that information from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and from local governments. He said the second aspect of the travel demand model is the change in zoning and planning that is also coming from local ordinances, and the third is highway and transit projects that will be built. He said that these three aspects go into the travel demand model, which is a TPB-developed model. He stated that the output from the travel demand model goes into the EPA-approved MOVES model which gives the emissions calculations.

Kanti Srikanth said that the earlier public comment pertains to the travel demand model which has been reviewed by federal entities and has gone through peer reviews. Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB will develop a technical memo responding to the main points of the comments heard today. He noted that every highway or transit project that is developed in this region by the TPB member jurisdictions uses that model. He stated that the TPB is also developing a next-generation model. He stated that the TPB will provide additional information on the nature of elasticities and how elasticities are implicit in some of the modeling techniques.

Christina Henderson commented that TPB staff said that the inclusion or not inclusion of the I-495 project results in identical air conformity analysis but also around congestion. She said that she thought this interesting given some of the testimony heard from public witnesses around the residual impact in terms of congestion in an area of the region that was not examined. She asked whether the analysis looks at the entire region.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB's analysis is at the regional level that includes all 23 member jurisdictions. He said that the model's fidelity does not allow the TPB to extract the individual impacts at the residential roadway level of any one project. He stated that for the entire Visualize 2050 with all its projects, population growth, land use, and demographic change, the I-495 project in and of itself is not moving the emissions and congestion needle at the regional level.

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Victor Weissberg asked if Kanti Srikanth could walk the TPB through what needs to happen between the end of the comment submissions and the December meeting when the final plan vote will take place.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB will decide whether to include the I-495 project in Visualize 2050, the TPB staff will then write up the entire report and the financial plan as per that decision and this comprehensive Visualize 2050 plan document will be released for a 30-day comment period on October 23, ending November 21. He said that November 19 is when the TPB meets, and staff will share the comments received during that 28-day period and the responses to the comments. He said that there will be two more days of comment left, and the balance of the comments will be shared on or before December 17. He said that December 17 is when the TPB will be asked to consider the comments received on the full plan and the responses. He said that the comment will be on the remaining parts of the Visualize plan not the I-495 project.

Lyn Erickson said that the TPB will do public outreach and videos that showcase the rest of the plan.

Michelle Shropshire said that she would provide an overview of I-495 Southside Express Lanes project, which is an environmental study VDOT is conducting to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. She said that the purpose of the project is to evaluate transportation improvements that would extend and provide continuity of an express lane system on the southern section of the Capital Beltway. She said the genesis of the project is from Visualize 2045, where aspirational initiatives identified expanding the express highway network in the Northern Virginia region.

Michelle Shropshire said that there is reoccurring congestion, and the no-build scenario shows that traffic conditions will continue to get worse. She referred to travel times indicated in the presentation. She stated that travel choices along this section of the Capital Beltway are limited with no reliable east-west bus transit to meet current or future needs. She said that there are bicycle and pedestrian connections, but they have gaps.

Michelle Shropshire presented the study background and history, stating that the study was initiated in 2022. She said that VDOT looked at 10 different study alternatives and narrowed down to two build alternatives, a one-express-lane and two-express-lane alternative. She said that VDOT conducted multiple analyses, and Virginia DRPT has helped inform the rail and TDM aspects of the study. She said that VDOT has determined that two express lanes in each direction is the build alternative that will best address current and future needs. She said that this would be two buffer-separated express lanes in each direction on I-495 that would incorporate new transit service and new bike and pedestrian improvements. She said that VDOT would be able to preserve space with conversion of the express lanes back to a space for future Metrorail when the region is ready.

Michelle Shropshire said that the project would be able to move up to 2,400 more people during peak hours with the express lanes and general-purpose lanes seeing increases in travel speeds. She said that the same number of general-purpose lanes that exist today would still be available after project is constructed. She said that VDOT has incorporated transit commitments into the project, including a new bus service between Central-West Prince George's County in Maryland and Tysons in Virginia. She said that this service was included in the TPB's air quality conformity analysis and is included in the draft NEPA document as a commitment, which is legally enforceable.

Michelle Shropshire said that VDOT agrees that impacts on local roads should be minimized and that a detailed traffic or operational analysis on interstates and their adjacent local roads is required and that VDOT would be conducting that analysis, as is required.

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Michelle Shropshire said that any mitigation that is found to become necessary to the local road networks as a result of this traffic or operational analysis would be documented in any future NEPA reevaluations that may be required for the project. She said that there would be about seven miles of bike and pedestrian facilities that are highlighted to be included with the preferred alternative in the NEPA document.

Michelle Shropshire stated that VDOT has held multiple public meetings over the past three years, and VDOT also had a stakeholder technical advisory group that has had a number of meetings over the course of our study. She said that over 900 online comment forms have been collected, and a public opinion survey of corridor users was conducted.

Michelle Shropshire stated that total emissions and greenhouse gases have no negative impacts with the inclusion of the project, and the fine particle emissions are slightly lower with the project. She said that supporting the project now does not mean that the scope or the design is final, but it allows VDOT to continue with the project development process and to keep coordinating with stakeholders and key partners.

Michelle Shropshire said that the I-495 SEL project is in the environmental study phase. She said that VDOT will continue to study and develop detailed engineering plans, make refinements, make mitigations, and develop a world-class project to address the transportation challenges that face the Southside Corridor, while integrating multimodal benefits for the regional travelers and the surrounding communities.

Neil Harris asked what the timeframe is for WMATA to move forward on a Blue Line extension and when might that take place.

Allison Davis said that WMATA is still working on what that would look like. She said that there is nothing definitive for exactly where VDOT is with this, but WMATA has been talking with them and working with them because the project involves constructing, operating, and maintaining a rail line across the bridge.

Chair Walkinshaw asked for clarification that WMATA currently has no timeline or plan with a timeline for a Blue Line extension over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Allison Davis said that is correct right now, and that if it were, the project would be in the TIP and in Visualize 2050.

Neil Harris said that on that basis there is no real alternative. He said the decision to move forward is this or a no-build alternative. He asked whether VDOT explored other alternative funding mechanisms for the SEL other than toll lanes.

Michelle Shropshire stated that the NEPA study being conducted right now has the purpose and need to evaluate expansion of an express lane network. She said that as VDOT moves forward with the development process, it will determine how best to deliver the project, whether that is through a traditional design build or rather that is through a P3 model. And that has been talked about at our public meetings and identified in our project development and delivery slide as part of our process, which is standard for any of these large-scale projects.

Marc Korman commented that the statistics that were given during the public comment about the decline of carpools and slugging related to Northern Virginia were surprising. He asked if VDOT has insight or comment about what has changed in the Northern Virginia market, which was such a longtime success story on carpooling and slugging, and why that seems to have gone down so significantly.

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Michelle Shropshire said that every day on the express lane network in Northern Virginia, there are about 1,800 carpool trips daily that are using the express lane network and around 2,600 bus trips that are using the existing managed lane network in Northern Virginia, and all of those are for free. She said that she would need to check as to other statistics on how much slugging is going on or not. She said that there are substantial amounts of carpool trips that are happening on the existing network that take cars out of the general-purpose lanes, and VDOT anticipates the same for the SEL.

Chair Walkinshaw said that the slugging culture developed based on people having predictable work schedules, and during COVID and immediately post-COVID, predictable work schedules or travel to the office declined. He said that he has seen in Fairfax County improvement from that decline. He said that slugging lines are returning, but it has been slow with people having less-predictable work schedules and fewer days in the office.

Maria Sinner said that VDOT is starting to notice an uptick on the park-and-ride utilization that goes hand-in-hand with slugging practices. She said that the federal workforce coming back to work five days a week is also increasing that incentive.

Marc Korman said that if the stats presented were accurate, it long predates COVID. He said that it sounds like the percentage basis before most of the HOT lanes were put in that allow free carpooling, the HOV lanes were higher with carpooling, so it might be a bigger story than just COVID. He asked whether there are real world P3 examples where a lane is given back before normally an agency would have to and are there examples P3s that cross state lines.

Michelle Shropshire said that VDOT has an existing P3 agreement referenced in the Transform 66 outside the Beltway, where there is future expansion of Metrorail in the median, and that has a horizon year where that will not be a compensation event in the future. She said that is similar in structure to the I-495 project. She stated that if there is a contemplated American Legion Bridge project, which would involve an agreement between both states.

Eric Olson said that the TPB presentation talked about average minutes of delay per trip, and then in 2050, it would be 5.9 minutes without the SEL. He said that with the Southside Lanes it would be 5.8 minutes. He said that this \$2-billion project, which is said to be paid for by itself but is actually paid for by Maryland largely and commuters. He said that it is paid for by people who commute for their jobs. He commented that we are going to spend that type of money on something that is only going to result in seconds versus minutes of improvement. He asked what the savings is in the first 10 years of service because the savings refers to 2050 in the presentation.

Kanti Srikanth said that the TPB analysis results are averaged for the entire region and for the 24-hour period across all lanes everywhere in the region. He said that within the corridor itself, the statistics will be different.

Michelle Shropshire stated that, as indicated in the VDOT slides, there would be faster travel times that are achieved, both in the general-purpose local lanes and the general-purpose through lanes with the implementation of the project. She said that VDOT looks at current conditions versus 2050 and does not look at an interim year. She said for the horizon year, VDOT has travel times up to 19 minutes faster in the general-purpose lanes, and then up to 10 minutes faster in the general-purpose lanes. This is both in the eastbound direction. She said that in the westbound direction, the time is up to 16 minutes faster in the local lanes.

Eric Olson asked if it is known how long people are going to be waiting in congestion to get into those lanes on MD 210 or on any of the feeder roads to I-495, or even on I-495 before that point.

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Michelle Shropshire said that VDOT has information about travel time increases and travel speed increases specifically through the Maryland 210 Interchange. She said at this juncture VDOT does not yet have analysis for those local arterial streets, which will be done post-NEPA. She said that is the next step in the process and is a requirement that those have to operate in an acceptable manner, and if mitigations are needed, VDOT would address those.

Eric Olson said that on slide 25 of the TPB presentation, it acknowledges more congestion on I-495 general-purpose lanes near the project area boundaries. He said that he believes that is acknowledging that there is more congestion anticipated beyond the project boundaries, and that is where more information is needed. He said those are really important things for Prince Georgians.

Michelle Shropshire said that VDOT's traffic analysis is more granular and what has been presented by TPB staff takes a regional view. She said that slide 12 of the VDOT presentation shows the better travel speeds. She said that the two express lanes show an increase in travel times in the Maryland area, demonstrating improvement with the implementation of the Southside project.

Victor Weissberg asked if VDOT would elaborate as to why there are no non-HOT alternatives carried forward that could have provided a more comprehensive study. He asked how the TPB can measure or approve the recommended alternative when the TPB does not have that comprehensive comparison.

Michelle Shropshire said that the genesis of VDOT's study was from Visualize 2045 that asked about looking at studying the gap in the express lanes network, and the purpose of the study was to look at evaluating transportation solutions that would extend and provide continuity of a managed lanes network on the southside of the Capital Beltway. She said that while VDOT did look at alternatives that include transportation and demand aspects, VDOT has layered those in the recommended preferred alternative with inclusion of a new bus transit line. She said that VDOT has also included bike and pedestrian accommodations that are included in the draft environmental assessment that VDOT is finalizing.

Jennifer Boysko said that some of this is confusing, hearing from the public comment from the environmental advocates and feeling like it is not in concert with what is being heard from staff. She asked about the HOT lanes ramp at I-295, stating that she had received a question from someone wondering if it would block future rail from connecting to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge or restrict it. She asked if the project would block Metrorail, and if so, what would the cost be for Metrorail and what would other conversion costs be, and who would be paying for it.

Michelle Shropshire said that there is not a recommended preferred alternative for rail to come across the bridge. She said that VDOT does not have anything to design in lieu of. She said that VDOT has had several rounds of technical meetings with WMATA and their team and will continue to engage with WMATA and their team as the project moves forward and WMATA works to define details for a potential project and to make sure that all of these things can work in concert together.

Monique Ashton said that the Virginia Commissioner of Highways sent a letter in response to Maryland's concerns. She stated that, in summary, VDOT says that they cannot and will not advance this project without the support of Maryland, and that includes both the Woodrow Wilson Bridge as well as the portions of Prince George's County. She stated that this does set a precedence in terms of another state putting toll lanes into the State of Maryland. She said that she thinks it is important that the TPB gets this right.

Monique Ashton said that in the VDOT letter, they note that they would be coming to agreement after they sort things out a bit more. She said that this puts Maryland in a difficult position because there is no percentage or anything that says this is what VDOT will do. She stated that she would like to raise again

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before the October vote that this does set a precedence, and Maryland has to think about this very critically. She said that the TPB has heard about the environmental concerns, and a firm commitment to go towards fundraising for rail would also be an important consideration for VDOT to come forward on with more information.

Chair Walkinshaw stated that TPB members can send additional comments and questions to Kanti Srikanth so that the questions and responses can be distributed to all TPB board members.

## **8. ADJOURN**

Chair Walkinshaw stated that the next meeting will be held in person on October 15, 2025. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:09 P.M.