

**ITEM 9 – ACTION**  
**October 15, 2025**

Visualize 2050 Finalization of Project Inputs for the  
Air Quality Conformity Analysis

**Action:** TPB will consider adopting one of the following resolutions: Resolution R1-2026 includes the construction of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project in Visualize 2050 and its air quality conformity analysis, and R2-2026 does not include the project.

**Background:** At this meeting, the TPB will finalize the regionally significant projects to be included in Visualize 2050 by taking action to include OR to defer VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project in the Visualize 2050 Plan and air quality conformity analysis. Due to unresolved issues and the timing of project development, in June 2024, the Board requested two sets of conformity analysis be conducted, one with and another without the project, so the Visualize 2050 Plan could proceed on time. The results of the analyses were shared with the TPB at its July 16, 2025 meeting. The TPB will receive a brief recap of the process and status, members will then have an opportunity to speak or ask questions, and the TPB will then be asked to vote on whether to include the project in Visualize 2050 at this time or not.

**MATERIALS**

- Resolutions R1-2026 and R2-2026
- Attached VDOT response letters referenced in R1-2026
- Background memo with FAQs



National Capital Region  
**Transportation Planning Board**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution R1-2026 and Resolution R2-2026 – Background and process for approval  
**DATE:** October 9, 2025

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The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) will finalize the regionally significant projects to be included in Visualize 2050 by taking action to include OR to defer VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project in the Visualize 2050 Plan and air quality conformity analysis. In June 2024, at the time when the TPB was finalizing the regionally significant projects to be included in air quality conformity analysis for Visualize 2050, the board deferred its action on this project until several of its members' concerns were fully/satisfactorily addressed. In order to allow VDOT to proceed with its project planning work, while also working with TPB members on the concerns identified, while preserving TPB's ability to adopt Visualize 2050 on schedule, the Board requested two sets of conformity analysis be conducted, one with and another without the project. The results of the analyses were shared with the TPB at its July 16, 2025, meeting and the TPB scheduled October 15, 2025 as the date to choose one of the two options.

The TPB will consider adopting one of the two resolutions attached here:

- Resolution R1-2026 includes the construction of the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project in the Visualize 2050 Plan and its air quality conformity analysis;
- Resolution R2-2026 does not include the project.

Please note that the "Whereas" clauses in both resolutions are identical in the first three pages and summarizes the Visualize 2050 development process and the board's discussions to date on the I-495 SEL project. The text on the fourth page is different and corresponds to the choice the board is being asked to make. For clarity, staff has identified the common language in **BLACK** font and the different language in **BLUE** font.

Staff has also developed a Frequently Asked Questions document which you can find in the Item 9 - Visualize 2050 I-495 SEL Project Action memo which captures many of the questions staff has received during past meetings and in the past few weeks.

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**  
**777 North Capitol Street, N.E.**  
**Washington, D.C. 20002**

**RESOLUTION ON INCLUSION OF THE I-95/I-495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES PROJECT IN  
THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS OF THE  
VISUALIZE 2050 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND THE  
FY 2026-2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**

**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning, May 27, 2016, Final Rule (as updated), for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR.450) assign TPB the responsibility to cooperatively develop the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and transportation improvement program (TIP) specified in Sections 450.324 and 450.326; and

**WHEREAS**, the TIP is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a basis and condition for all federal funding assistance to state, local and regional agencies for transportation improvements within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. planning area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule as published in the May 27, 2016 (as updated), Federal Register by the FTA and FHWA requires that the MTP, and the TIP be reviewed and updated at least every four years; and

**WHEREAS**, federal conformity regulations, originally published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the November 24, 1993, Federal Register and with latest amendments published in March 2012 (as updated), based on the federal Clean Air Act (CAA Section 176(c)), require that the metropolitan transportation plan, program and projects in metropolitan areas not in attainment of national ambient air quality standards, demonstrate conformity to the area's state implementation plan and reviewed and updated at least every four years; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 15, 2022, the TPB adopted resolutions R16-2022 determining that the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and FY 2023-2026 TIP conform with the federal air quality conformity requirements and resolution R15-2022 approving the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and approving the FY 2023-2026 TIP, and

**WHEREAS**, the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and FY 2023-2026 TIP were approved by the FTA and FHWA on August 25, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB's resolution R19-2021 called for updating Visualize 2045 using a "zero-based budgeting" approach to update projects in the MTP that would have the TPB member agencies re-examine all of the projects in Visualize 2045 and resubmit an updated mix of projects in order to better achieve the region's goals, while providing for projects under construction or funded to be exempt from the above requirement; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB issued the Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 Technical Inputs Solicitation Submission Guide on February 15, 2023, asking the TPB member agencies to review all projects in the MTP, Visualize 2045, and re-submit projects; and

**WHEREAS**, following the direction from TPB's resolution R19-2021, as part of the Visualize 2050 Technical Inputs Solicitation, TPB and agency staff conducted a process to re-examine the capacity-related projects in Visualize 2045, where such improvements are significant for consideration in the air quality conformity analysis, and resubmit an updated mix of projects supported by updated revenue and expenditure estimates for new capital projects through 2050 demonstrating that funding is reasonably expected to be available; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB staff launched an open period for public input on projects that would be submitted for Visualize 2050 between February 15 through November 30, 2023, sharing the feedback monthly with the TPB and TPB Technical Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2023, TPB staff hosted three virtual facilitated listening sessions, during which the TPB member Transportation agency staff presented their processes for re-examining the projects in the current transportation plan and developing new projects proposed for inclusion while also hearing from the TPB members about the types of projects the TPB members would like to see proposed to be included in Visualize 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, the submitted inputs for the update to the Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis Scope of Work were reviewed by the Technical Committee at its meetings on October 6, November 3, 2023, February 2, March 1, April 5, and May 3, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2024, the scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects submitted for air quality conformity analysis were released for a 30-day public comment period and inter-agency review; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB was briefed on the submissions for the Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP at its November 15, December 20, 2023, March 21, and April 17, 2024, meetings and a board work session was conducted on March 21, 2024, to provide a facilitated review of those inputs; and

**WHEREAS**, several members of the Board had questions on the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project proposed by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and identified specific topics that needed to be further defined and better understood especially by the jurisdictions directly impacted by the project; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 15, 2024, the TPB considered Resolution R12-2024, which included all the project submissions of the TPB member agencies for inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Visualize 2050 Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, during discussions on Resolution R12-2024, the Board noted the need for additional time to have the previously identified concerns with VDOT's I-495 SEL project fully and satisfactorily addressed and acted to approve all remaining projects proposed for inclusion in the air quality Conformity analysis with of Visualize 2050, and to consider adding the I-495 SEL project at its June 20, 2024, meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 20, 2024, the TPB considered Resolution R13-2024, to include the I-495 SEL project in the air quality conformity analysis, determined that the previously identified concerns with the project had not been addressed, acknowledged VDOT's notification that the TPB's air quality conformity analysis and Plan update were an important part of VDOT's project development work, specifically the NEPA study and that VDOT would work with TPB members to address the concerns identified; and

**WHEREAS**, in the interest of allowing VDOT to continue with its NEPA study, while working with TPB members to address their concerns with the project while also preserving TPB's ability to update its MTP on schedule, TPB adopted Resolution R13-2024 directing staff to conduct two alternative sets of regional air quality conformity analysis: One without the I-495 SEL project and one including the I-495 SEL project, revised the schedule to adopt Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP to approve the air quality conformity analysis and to adopt Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP at its December 17, 2025, and resolving that the TPB intends to approve only one of the two alternative regional air quality conformity analyses when the conformity analyses were completed; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with the direction in Resolution R13-2024, on July 16, 2025, TPB staff presented the results of the conformity analyses and information on the anticipated performance of the transportation system for both options, and scheduled today's TPB action on VDOT's proposal to include the I-495 SEL project in Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and for selecting one of the two alternative conformity analyses to proceed further.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, based on the assurances and commitments made by VDOT to TPB members including those documented in VDOT's letters in the attachment herein:

1. Approves VDOT's proposal to include the I-495 SEL Project, as submitted to and reviewed by the TPB, in the air quality conformity analysis for the proposed Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP; and
2. Directs staff to finalize the air quality conformity analysis report, the Draft Visualize 2050 Plan and the Draft FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) documents with the I-495 SEL project and to release these documents for the required 30 day public comment period which will allow the TPB to consider approving the conformity analysis and adopting Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP at its December 17, 2025, meeting.

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**  
**777 North Capitol Street, N.E.**  
**Washington, D.C. 20002**

**RESOLUTION ON INCLUSION OF THE I-95/I-495 SOUTHSIDE EXPRESS LANES PROJECT IN  
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VISUALIZE 2050 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND THE  
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**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning, May 27, 2016, Final Rule (as updated), for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR.450) assign TPB the responsibility to cooperatively develop the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and transportation improvement program (TIP) specified in Sections 450.324 and 450.326; and

**WHEREAS**, the TIP is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a basis and condition for all federal funding assistance to state, local and regional agencies for transportation improvements within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. planning area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule as published in the May 27, 2016 (as updated), Federal Register by the FTA and FHWA requires that the MTP, and the TIP be reviewed and updated at least every four years; and

**WHEREAS**, federal conformity regulations, originally published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the November 24, 1993, Federal Register and with latest amendments published in March 2012 (as updated), based on the federal Clean Air Act (CAA Section 176(c)), require that the metropolitan transportation plan, program and projects in metropolitan areas not in attainment of national ambient air quality standards, demonstrate conformity to the area's state implementation plan and reviewed and updated at least every four years; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 15, 2022, the TPB adopted resolutions R16-2022 determining that the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and FY 2023-2026 TIP conform with the federal air quality conformity requirements and resolution R15-2022 approving the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and approving the FY 2023-2026 TIP, and

**WHEREAS**, the 2022 Update to Visualize 2045 Plan and FY 2023-2026 TIP were approved by the FTA and FHWA on August 25, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB's resolution R19-2021 called for updating Visualize 2045 using a "zero-based budgeting" approach to update projects in the MTP that would have the TPB member agencies re-examine all of the projects in Visualize 2045 and resubmit an updated mix of projects in order to better achieve the region's goals, while providing for projects under construction or funded to be exempt from the above requirement; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB issued the Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 Technical Inputs Solicitation Submission Guide on February 15, 2023, asking the TPB member agencies to review all projects in the MTP, Visualize 2045, and re-submit projects; and

**WHEREAS**, following the direction from TPB's resolution R19-2021, as part of the Visualize 2050 Technical Inputs Solicitation, TPB and agency staff conducted a process to re-examine the capacity-related projects in Visualize 2045, where such improvements are significant for consideration in the air quality conformity analysis, and resubmit an updated mix of projects supported by updated revenue and expenditure estimates for new capital projects through 2050 demonstrating that funding is reasonably expected to be available; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB staff launched an open period for public input on projects that would be submitted for Visualize 2050 between February 15 through November 30, 2023, sharing the feedback monthly with the TPB and TPB Technical Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2023, TPB staff hosted three virtual facilitated listening sessions, during which the TPB member Transportation agency staff presented their processes for re-examining the projects in the current transportation plan and developing new projects proposed for inclusion while also hearing from the TPB members about the types of projects the TPB members would like to see proposed to be included in Visualize 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, the submitted inputs for the update to the Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis Scope of Work were reviewed by the Technical Committee at its meetings on October 6, November 3, 2023, February 2, March 1, April 5, and May 3, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2024, the scope of work for the air quality conformity analysis of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects submitted for air quality conformity analysis were released for a 30-day public comment period and inter-agency review; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB was briefed on the submissions for the Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP at its November 15, December 20, 2023, March 21, and April 17, 2024, meetings and a board work session was conducted on March 21, 2024, to provide a facilitated review of those inputs; and



**WHEREAS**, several members of the Board had questions on the I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL) project proposed by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and identified specific topics that needed to be further defined and better understood especially by the jurisdictions directly impacted by the project; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 15, 2024, the TPB considered Resolution R12-2024, which included all the project submissions of the TPB member agencies for inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Visualize 2050 Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, during discussions on Resolution R12-2024, the Board noted the need for additional time to have the previously identified concerns with VDOT's I-495 SEL project fully and satisfactorily addressed and acted to approve all remaining projects proposed for inclusion in the air quality Conformity analysis with of Visualize 2050, and to consider adding the I-495 SEL project at its June 20, 2024, meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 20, 2024, the TPB considered Resolution R13-2024, to include the I-495 SEL project in the air quality conformity analysis, determined that the previously identified concerns with the project had not been addressed, acknowledged VDOT's notification that the TPB's air quality conformity analysis and Plan update were an important part of VDOT's project development work, specifically the NEPA study and that VDOT would work with TPB members to address the concerns identified; and

**WHEREAS**, in the interest of allowing VDOT to continue with its NEPA study, while working with TPB members to address their concerns with the project while also preserving TPB's ability to update its MTP on schedule, TPB adopted Resolution R13-2024 directing staff to conduct two alternative sets of regional air quality conformity analysis: One without the I-495 SEL project and one including the I-495 SEL project, revised the schedule to adopt Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP to approve the air quality conformity analysis and to adopt Visualize 2050 and FY 2026-2029 TIP at its December 17, 2025, and resolving that the TPB intends to approve only one of the two alternative regional air quality conformity analyses when the conformity analyses were completed; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with the direction in Resolution R13-2024, on July 16, 2025, TPB staff presented the results of the conformity analyses and information on the anticipated performance of the transportation system for both options, and scheduled today's TPB action on VDOT's proposal to include the I 495 SEL project in Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and for selecting one of the two alternative conformity analyses to proceed further; [and](#)

**WHEREAS**, the TPB recognizes the I-495 corridor across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge is of regional and of national importance and significance and would benefit from improvements to enhance mobility and accessibility along the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, the I-495 proposed SEL project holds promise to support the region's goals on equity, safe, efficient and reliable transit service, but others have concerns about the long-term impact on transit options and localized traffic impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the I-495 SEL project as currently proposed has yet to fully and satisfactorily address the issues identified to secure concurrence from all the jurisdictions through which it would traverse.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board:

1. Defers including the I-495 SEL Project in the air quality conformity analysis for the proposed Visualize 2050 Plan and the FY 2026-2029 TIP and encourages VDOT and MDOT to continue to explore project options and work with local jurisdictions towards securing a consensus on this important regional corridor, and
2. Directs staff to finalize the air quality conformity analysis report, the Draft Visualize 2050 Plan and the Draft FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) documents without the I-495 SEL project and to release these documents for the required 30 day public comment period which will allow the TPB to consider approving the conformity analysis and adopting Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP at its December 17, 2025, meeting.