



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

Aspirational Initiatives





ASPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES FOR A BETTER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



THE CHALLENGE

By 2045, metropolitan Washington will be home to 1.3 million more people and 1 million more jobs.

Available funding for transportation and the types of planned improvements can't do enough to prevent significant increases in **congestion and travel delays**.

Transportation Dollars

81%
Maintenance
and Operations





THE SOLUTION

TPB's Visualize 2045 plan prioritizes initiatives that make the most of every dollar, offering everyone in the region more options for where to live and how to get around. Here's how:

Concentrate land use in Activity Centers where housing, jobs, and transit are close to each other **Circulate** people in Activity Centers via safe, accessible travel options for work and play

Connect Activity Centers via high-capacity regional transit and express highways

Aspirational Initiatives Bring jobs and Improve walk Complete the Expand the and bike access **National Capital** Trail Network to transit Expand bus Move more rapid transit and people on and other options transitwavs Metrorail for commuting

THE IMPACT

Improved quality of life

- ▶ Vibrant, mixed-use communities
- ► More and affordable housing options
- ▶ More time with family and friends

More ways to get around

- ► Equitable, accessible, safe choices
- Shorter trips
- ▶ Options to walk, bike, drive, and take transit to work and play

Improved economic competitiveness

- More reliable and reduced travel times
- ► More efficient movement of goods
- ▶ Greater access to employment opportunities

Source: TPB















TPB's Aspirational Initiatives

In 2018, the TPB adopted seven transportation initiatives. Each initiative incorporates policies and transportation solutions that the TPB has championed for years as documented in the Congestion Management Process (CMP). These strategies are most effective when working together by providing more options, and lower-carbon options, on a well-integrated and reliable transportation network. As the TPB members prioritize funding and enact these strategies, the region has the potential to significantly improve its transportation system performance. With the update to Visualize 2045, the region will make progress on these initiatives that improve mobility, accessibility, and air quality in the region while contributing to the region's GHG reduction and climate resiliency goals.

Arriving at and promoting implementation of the initiatives:

The TPB led a study that engaged a long-range plan task force to establish consensus on regional policy priorities, which led to the 2018 endorsement of the Aspirational Initiatives, listed below:

- Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together by concentrating more housing and jobs in central locations such as Activity Centers and near high-capacity transit station areas to make it possible for more people of all incomes to live near employment and other frequent destinations. This can enable trips to be shorter and reduce auto trips as people will be able to choose from a range of travel options.
- Expand Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways throughout the region to provide people not only more transit options but also a reliable and fast bus service for work and non-work trips.
- Move More People on Metrorail, by providing more frequent services with longer trains and expanded stations that are accessible by nonmotorized modes.
- Provide More Telecommuting and Other Options for Commuting
 to take advantage of the many jobs suitable for teleworking and to
 provide employees with transit and nonmotorized travel benefits
 and disincentivize commute parking.
- Expand Express Highway Network strategically, in an environmentally sensitive manner, to create a network that connects much of the region, featuring express bus systems and allowing carpools and vanpools to be exempt from tolls.
- Improve Walk and Bike Access to Transit, as investments that remove barriers to walking and biking to transit stations to reduce auto travel and help fully utilize the investments already made in high-capacity transit.
- Complete the National Capital Trail Network to create an extensive network of trails that provides walk and bicycle access to jobs and other activities by connecting communities across the region to Activity Centers.



Following the endorsement of the initiatives, the TPB's staff visited the TPB's technical agencies to discuss the initiatives, learn what the agencies were undertaking that advanced the initiatives, and to identify opportunities for the TPB to support implementation of the initiatives. The TPB promotes the Aspirational Initiatives by providing communications tools such as brochures, infographics and animated videos about the initiatives so that people can learn and share information about the concepts behind these initiatives and the benefits they can bring to the region. See these videos and graphics at

www.visualize2045.org/plan-update/resources/.

The TPB also conducts analysis and develops technical tools, data, products, and programs to support the implementation of initiatives in response to the TPB Resolution R10-2019 which directed staff to conduct activities related to the implementation of three of the Aspirational Initiatives.





Equity Considerations

Where and how the Aspirational Initiatives are implemented can have an impact on equity outcomes in our region. To assist implementing agencies consider equity in the planning process, the TPB makes the Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs) available as a planning tool to examine demographic patterns in the region. For example, EEA locations can be used to plan and prioritize areas to improve walk and bicycles access, transit movements, and routing. The TPB also conducts studies and outreach that consider equity across a range of subjects and encourages the findings to be considered when planning for investments that promote the initiatives. The benefits of the initiatives, when implemented together regionwide, can address some of the top equity concerns raised during the focus groups, such as safe walk and bike access to transit, housing affordability near a range of transportation options, transportation access, travel time, and reliability.











How to Support the Aspirational Initiatives

TPB: Members can consider how and where in their jurisdiction or agency's planning and policy processes the jurisdiction or agency can take action toward the Aspirational Initiatives. While barriers such as funding silos and long project development timelines are legitimate constraints, when possible, seek opportunities to prioritize or expedite projects, programs, and policies that align with the initiatives.

Technical Staff: Staff to TPB members can consider how initiative concepts can help to solve local and regional challenges. Staff can use the EEA tools and findings from other TPB studies and research to inform the development of projects, programs and policies. Staff can review, share, and consider the implications of the Voices of the Region's findings to inform or enhance project, policy and program development.

The Public: Members of the public can participate in the local planning process through avenues such as local surveys, focus groups, social media, and community planning and budget meetings. The public can participate in local meetings about new development and transportation projects. They can support initiatives that they find important and emphasize what project features and outcomes are most important to them. People can write to local leaders to show support for the initiatives and projects that align with the ideas behind these initiatives such improving bike and walk access to transit. A few specific examples include:

- Show support for new BRT and transitways plans projects in your jurisdiction. Support funding the projects and project features that make these projects successful, such as level boarding, dedicated lanes and transit signal priority.
- Support new transit-oriented development and affordable developments in your jurisdiction to help make room for more people in our region.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about initiatives being implemented through Visualize 2045 in Chapter 7 of the plan, or view by jurisdiction **online**.

Organizations: Share the TPB's Aspirational Initiatives with stakeholders. Promote or support implementation of the initiatives that align with the agency's mission.

Everyone: Share the animated videos and infographics that the TPB has produced to communicate the concepts and benefits of the Aspirational Initiatives. **Find these at Visualize2045.org.**

BRING JOBS AND HOUSING CLOSER TOGETHER



THE CHALLENGE

People travel from their homes to find jobs and opportunities. But jobs and housing are often not near each other, leading to longer commutes. A lack of travel options and affordable housing near jobs leads to congestion and delays.

As the region grows, how can we improve travel for all?





Since 2010, the region has focused on building **new homes in Activity Centers**, where housing, jobs, and transit are all close to each other.



But, Activity Centers are home to just 29% of the population, despite containing 66% of the jobs.

THE SOLUTION

Here's how we can reduce congestion for everyone, while expanding housing options for people who want to live closer to where jobs are.

- Create and support policies
 that encourage building more housing
 - 320,000 new units needed by 2030
 - 75% to be affordable and near Activity Centers and transit
- Improve travel options in and between Activity Centers

This approach works! More choices mean less congestion. •



How we get around is changing

Drive Alone - - - - - - - - - - - **13**%

Take Transit - - - - - - - - ▲ 7%

Use Active Travel - - - - - - A Doubled

Telework - - - - - - A Tripled

(Change in each travel type's share of daily commutes, 2001–2019)

THE IMPACT



Reduced traffic and emissions from transportation



Expanded travel options and shorter trips



Vibrant communities where people can live, work, and play



Source: TPB

A stronger economy and improved quality of life





- housing are concentrated and it's easy to walk, bike, or take public transit.
- Taking advantage of underused Metrorail stations and focusing growth in HCT station areas. Local planning efforts would encourage housing and job growth close to Metrorail stations that aren't as busy as others and have available space nearby for new construction.
- Coordinated local policies. This initiative asks regional leaders to coordinate local policies through zoning and revisions in local plans, allowing more people to live closer to jobs.

Visualize the Future:

- Fewer, shorter trips in cars. More housing close to Metrorail stations and in Activity Centers would let more people walk to work and transit. That means fewer cars on our region's roads. And that would significantly reduce congestion, making driving more reliable for those who commute by car.
- Reduced traffic from commuting from outside the region. Our region doesn't have enough housing for our expected growth. By building more housing, we can encourage more people to live in our region instead of commuting in and out every day.
- Increased economic opportunity. More jobs would be available to more people within a short distance from home—which is particularly important for the car-free and workers with low income.
- Vibrant communities. Imagine being able to walk and bike to work, school, errands, and fun. It's good for our health and for the environment. More household growth concentrated in central locations would help us achieve that future.
- **New housing** in Brookland in the District of Columbia demonstrates the concepts of this initiative. In Maryland, new housing planned for and under construction near the Purple Line stops exemplifies this concept. In Virginia, developments planned around the new Silver Line and the North Woodbridge Small Area Plan represent the concepts of this initiative.

TPB's Role

The TPB calls upon regional leaders to promote policies that "Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together," especially focusing growth in Activity Centers. And, TPB Resolution R4-2022, focuses on building transitoriented communities (TOC) throughout the region around HCT station areas using Equity Emphasis Areas as a key planning concept and tool to inform decision-making and action. Learn more in the Land Use section of this chapter and visit TPB's interactive HCT/EEA website to explore information for planners, policymakers, and other area leaders as they design TOCs and weave equity into planning decisions.

Expand Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways Regionwide

What is it?

- A dramatically expanded transit service. Bus rapid transit, or BRT, is an enhanced, high-frequency
 service that makes use of transitways and brings together other enhancements that can move more
 people faster and more reliably than traditional bus services. Express bus, streetcar, and light rail
 systems would be available for more people in more places throughout the region.
- **Targeted rail projects.** Streetcar and light rail routes would provide targeted connections within the regionwide system, serving high-density locations and promoting economic development.

Visualize the Future

- Bus agencies in metropolitan Washington provide over 164 million trips annually, and most people live within 1/4 mile of a bus route. But increased traffic means trips are getting slower and less reliable. Enhancements such as dedicated lanes and transit signals that prioritize bus travel can improve mobility.
- A diversity of transit options. Imagine having access to express transit, even if you live or work far from a Metrorail or regional rail station. Providing more BRT and transitways in corridors not well served by a Metrorail station can address equity concerns in our region by providing more people, including people living in EEAs with better access to fast, frequent and reliable low-cost transit. BRT buses would operate in their own separated lanes with payment systems and level boarding to get people on and off quickly. Level boarding that does not require stairs or a lift to ride the bus will create an improved experience for people with limited physical abilities.
- More access to jobs. Along with new transit comes access to new opportunities. BRT, light rail, and
 streetcars would not only connect the region's many Activity Centers—our economic engines—but would
 also help people move around within them. More transit would provide new travel options for scores of
 people who currently struggle to get to and from work.
- **Better access for people who walk and bicycle to transit.** New buses and rail encourage walking and bicycling. To maximize the benefit of new transit services, we need to make sure people can get to and from stations on sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes safely.
- Metroway that connects Alexandria and Arlington, VA was the first BRT system in our region, launching in 2014. In 2020, Montgomery County, MD, began service on its first Flash BRT line and has plans for several more BRT lines. DDOT is continuing to advance transitways such as the H&I Street Bus Lanes project and the 16th St NW Transit Priority project. Agencies are studying additional BRT potential for the region, expect to see more studies and plans for BRT and transitways, and more projects moving to implementation.

TPB's Role

The TPB has conducted studies that provide analytical backing for the regional benefit of BRT and transitways. The TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee discusses local BRT project features and implementation approaches. The TPB also gathers public opinion through its Voices of the Region outreach and promotes the initiative through **animated videos and infographics**.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT AND TRANSITWAYS: FAST-TRACK YOUR TRIP



Bus agencies in metropolitan Washington provide over **164 million trips annually**, and most people live within 1/4 mile of a bus route. But increased traffic means trips are getting slower and less reliable. Enhancements such as dedicated lanes and transit signals that prioritize bus travel can improve mobility.



Bus rapid transit, or BRT, is an enhanced, high-frequency service that makes use of transitways and brings together other enhancements that can move more people faster and more reliably than traditional bus services.

HOW IT WORKS



Improved stations have offboard fare collection and platform-level, all-door boarding.

Frequent, reliable service shortens wait times.

Transitways with dedicated lanes provide faster trips.

Transit signal priority and queue jumping let BRT buses go first at traffic lights, reducing delay.



WHY IT MATTERS



More reliable, faster trips



More affordable travel options



Expanded access to jobs and opportunities



Improved mobility options



Fewer greenhouse gas emissions

BRT and	Transitways	in Your N	leighborhood
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Location	Description
Metroway BRT: Arlington and Alexandria, VA	5.6 miles connecting the Pentagon City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations
Flash BRT: Montgomery County, MD	14-mile stretch of U.S. Route 29
Transitway: District of Columbia	3 miles along 16th Street NW



- **Longer trains.** In the near-term future, eight-car trains (instead of six-car trains) would run on all lines at all times.
- **Expanded stations.** Stations at the heart of the system would be expanded to handle new riders with less crowding. These changes would include expanded mezzanines and new fare gates and escalators
- Other Metrorail enhancements such as new stations and services.

Visualize the Future

- **Dependability.** With major investments to bring Metrorail to a state of good repair, imagine more trains, running more often, with stations that have space for more people. The expanded capacity would make the Metrorail system more reliable and efficient.
- **Region-wide impacts.** Enhancing capacity on the existing system would benefit the whole region. Currently, the 26 stations in the region's core are the destination or transfer point for 80 percent of all rail riders system-wide. When those links are clogged, travel everywhere is affected.
- Alleviate congestion. These projects would not only affect transit riders. By making it easier to
 get on the train, we can ease congestion on the roadways and improve travel time for trips people
 take daily, whether on Metrorail or by car.
- **World-class system.** The economic benefits to the people and businesses in our region by helping them conduct their daily business travel with ease. Enhanced capacity on Metrorail would improve access to jobs and strengthen our competitive advantage in the global economy.
- More cars, more stations. In addition to the eight-car trains that will be added to the Metrorail
 system, another example of a project in the constrained element that will help to move more
 people on Metrorail is the new Potomac Yard Station in Alexandria (CE1978).

TPB's Role

The TPB has long championed Metrorail as a critical service in the region. At key moments, the TPB has come together to push for increased regional transit funding. The TPB promotes Metrorail service improvements that will help people in our region get where they need to go reliably, conveniently, and with limited carbon footprint.

Provide More Telecommuting and Other Options for Commuting

What is it?

- **Reducing solo car trips.** This initiative would expand programs to increase the number of people who telework, find carpools, or use transit. These programs can be implemented by employers, government programs, or both.
- More workers teleworking. As a result of employer-based incentives and new telework habits
 developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of people that will telework in the
 future will likely be higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional survey responses
 about telework preferences indicate that this is a reasonable expectation in years to come.
 In addition, workplaces would let employees come to work early or late some days to avoid
 traveling during rush hour.
- Subsidies for not driving. Employer-funded transportation benefits would be more supportive
 of non-SOV options. Many more employees would receive transit and carpool subsidies from
 their employer. Workers who currently receive free parking could receive the cash value of that
 benefit to pay for transit or other commuting options (known as parking cash-out.)
- Reduced parking incentives at work. Local governments and employers would stop subsidizing the cost of parking in the region's Activity Centers, where jobs and housing are concentrated. This would encourage more people to carpool or take transit. The new parking prices would vary based on distance from central business districts. Areas that currently do not charge for parking would charge lower amounts than those that already charge.

Visualize the Future

- Getting cars off the road. Imagine a future with fewer cars clogging the road, polluting the air
 and emitting GHG that contribute to climate changes. This initiative would take many cars off
 roads due to the number of people telecommuting and using alternate modes on any given day.
 Without needing to build any new roads or other infrastructure, this initiative greatly lessens
 congestion due to the vast reduction in people traveling alone in cars at any given time.
- **Reduced emissions.** Vehicle emissions would consequently decrease, greatly benefiting the region's air quality and environment.

TPB's Role

The TPB's Commuter Connections program is a regional network that provides commuter services and information to area residents and employers in the metropolitan Washington region to reduce traffic congestion and emissions caused by single occupant vehicles (SOVs). To support implementation of this initiative the Commuter Connections staff produced telework and flexwork materials including sample agreements and policy templates, FAQs, best practices for teleworking, and updated information on alternative work schedules. Find these on the **Commuter Connections** website. Learn more in the Travel Demand Management (TDM) section of this chapter.



Building on an emerging toll road network. Managed lanes exist today on new facilities in Maryland and Virginia. We are already seeing that toll and carpool lanes are the most likely way that we will be able to fund needed road projects in our growing region, even as we seek to reduce our dependence on driving. They would also encourage carpooling by exempting cars with 3+ people from the tolls.

New opportunities for transit. A new network of express buses would travel in the express lanes, connecting people and jobs throughout the region. The revenues generated from the tolls would be used to operate the new extensive regional network of high-quality bus services.

Visualize the Future

- Less congestion, faster trips. The expanded express lane system would reduce average travel times and congestion. Driving would be more reliable and predictable.
- Speedy bus service. Operating in free-flowing traffic would ensure reliable bus service. For
 people who cannot regularly afford to drive in toll lanes, express buses would provide an
 attractive and dependable way to take advantage of the congestion-free express lanes.
- **Expanded access to jobs.** Express lanes would expand economic opportunity, making it easier for commuters to know with certainty that they can get to work on time on a regular basis.

Examples of expressways in the region include the express lanes on I-66, funds from tolls on these lanes have raised substantial funds to support transit in northern Virginia. The Maryland 'Op Lanes' (the largest initiative of the MDOT SHA's statewide Traffic Relief Plan) planned for I-495 and I-270 are another example of dynamically managed lanes. This plan update includes three different segments of the proposed Op Lanes: (1) Managed lanes on I-495 from George Washington Memorial Parkway to MD 187 and on I-270 from the I-495 to I-370, (I-270 southern segment) to be constructed by 2025; (2) Managed lanes on I-270 from I-370 to I-70, (I-270 northern segment) to be constructed by 2030 and (3) managed lanes on I-495 from MD 187 to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, referred to as the eastern segment, included as a study, not construction. Both express lanes provide for express service for transit and carpools (3+) and vanpools ride free.

TPB's Role

The TPB has long championed congestion relief, documenting analysis and strategies in its CMP. Congestion impacts people and business traveling today. With forecasts for an additional 1.3 million people and nearly 1 million jobs by 2045, the challenge is not only to reduce congestion and transportation emissions but to mitigate growth in congestion and delay resulting from additional demand. Expressways that incentivize carpools and vanpools and expedite transit service, while using dynamic tolling to manage congestion, are one strategy that can help the region meet its goals.



road that cannot be crossed. If you live or work within a half mile of a rail or BRT station, you should be able to walk or roll to the station within 10 minutes on average, or easily bike to the station.

Removing barriers for walkers and bicyclists. Sidewalks would be built or repaired, crosswalks and bike facilities would be installed, and new trails would be constructed. Walking or biking would be comfortable and convenient.

Visualize the Future

- **Safe and comfortable.** Imagine having easy and safe access to transit, free of worry from gaps in sidewalk networks, poor lighting, or lack of safe crossings. Throughout the region, many more people would have safe and easy access to high-capacity transit—not only would this mean that people's personal safety while walking or biking to transit stations would improve—but it would also mean more people would choose to use transit because it would become a much more attractive option to them.
- **Providing key links.** First- and last-mile connections would provide access to jobs and other destinations with shorter commute times. Such cost-effective measures can improve Metro ridership and stimulate the economy. More people taking transit would take more cars off the roads, improving the environment and helping to reduce congestion for those who drive.
- **Easily move around your community.** Diverse economic activities would thrive if people can easily move around their communities. Older adults, people with disabilities, and transit-dependent populations would have more opportunities to get around without a car. Communities would benefit from increased street life and renewed vibrancy.

TPB's Role

With board direction to support implementation of this initiative, the TPB staff conducted the Transit Within Reach project that prioritized locations with the greatest need and opportunity to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. These "Transit Access Focus Areas" (TAFAs) are distributed across the TPB's jurisdictions, serve a variety of transit systems, and all are located within a half mile of one of the region's Activity Centers. Forty-three out of 49 TAFAs are in Equity Emphasis Areas, which have high concentrations of low-income population and communities of color. In 2020, through Resolution R4-2021, the TPB adopted the TAFAs and asked TPB member jurisdictions to prioritize projects, programs, and policies that will implement improvements in the TAFAs.

To further advance its work with TAFAs and more broadly to promote implementation of the initiative, the TPB has established the Transit Within Reach Program to move small high-impact projects into preliminary design or preliminary engineering (30 percent). See an interactive map and listing of the TAFAs online at: mwcog.org/maps/map-listing/tafa/. To support and advance transit-oriented communities (TOCs) the TPB staff developed an interactive web map to build understanding and awareness of high-capacity transit (HCT) station areas, or areas around Metrorail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, bus rapid transit, and multimodal stations. Agencies and organizations can use the map to identify opportunities for enhancing housing and transportation connectivity in areas served by transit, with consideration given to benefits to disadvantaged populations by considering connectivity to and within EEAs.



Visualize the Future

Access for People of All Ages and Abilities. People will be able to get on these trails and be confident that they can go as far as they like, from one end of the region to the other, on a facility network that minimizes stress and supports safety.

Access to Opportunities. When complete, the trail would connect 136 of the region's Activity Centers, where jobs, housing, and transit are concentrated. Over 4 million people and $2\frac{1}{2}$ million jobs will be located within a half mile of the network. People will be able to bike or walk to jobs, school, or entertainment.

Access to Nature. The trail network will provide healthy, low-stress access from cities and neighborhoods to parks and rural areas.

TPB's Role

Through regional analysis and member input, staff produced a framework for the National Capital Trail Network, a long-distance, continuous network of low-stress, mostly off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails that will serve the entire Washington region. Approved by the board in 2020, the network will be updated over time. See an interactive map of the National Capital Trail Network as approved 2020 online at mwcog.org/maps/map-listing/national-capital-trail-network/.



Aspirational Initiatives

The Visualize 2045 update calls upon local jurisdictions and funding agencies to implement projects, programs, and policies in line with the seven Aspirational Initiatives. The TPB believes that the anticipated growth in travel demand calls for increasing and accelerated investment in projects, programs, and policies in line with the initiatives to help the region attain its transportation goals. Across the region, TPB member jurisdictions and agencies are planning and implementing these initiatives, some of which must be included in the constrained element. To be included in the constrained element, projects must be funded and meet other criteria.

There are several hundred project records in the constrained element project list. Table 1 provides a summary of how the projects align with each of the

TPB's endorsed Aspirational Initiatives. This summary is compiled from information provided by each project sponsor in response to questions in the 2020 **Technical Inputs Solicitation**.

As the TPB indicated when it endorsed the Aspirational Initiatives a few years ago, it seeks to make more of these concepts come to life, faster. While developing new projects can take many years, the new funding from the BiPartisan Infrastructure Law could enable projects that have been in development to be funded sooner, accelerating implementation of the Aspirational Initiatives.

Table 1: Aspirational Initiatives — Project Sponsor Responses

127 47 48 42 32 162 36 **BRING PROVIDE MORE EXPAND EXPAND IMPROVE** COMPLETE **JOBS AND MOVE MORE TELECOMMUTING BRT AND EXPRESS WALK AND** THE NATIONAL AND OTHER **PEOPLE ON HOUSING TRANSITWAYS HIGHWAY BIKE ACCESS CAPITAL TRAIL CLOSER METRORAIL OPTIONS FOR** TO TRANSIT REGIONWIDE **NETWORK NETWORK TOGETHER** COMMUTING



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