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CHAPTER

What Happens Next?

Through this plan, our region Visualizes its Future Together. What will it look like? What challenges does the region face, and how does it work together to overcome them? This section looks back at progress, and reflects on challenges of the present moment and years ahead. It looks forward to actions needed to achieve the desired outcomes outlined in TPB goals, while continuing to meet the federal requirements for metropolitan planning.

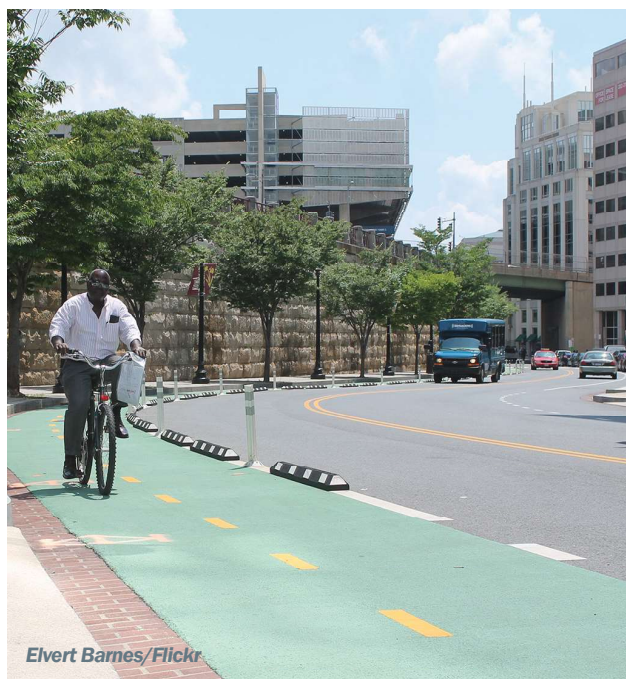
Looking Back

The TPB has set goals and developed strategies to achieve them. The region's agencies have applied the strategies as appropriate to local context and have worked together to implement projects that span jurisdictional borders to connect the region. **Over the last few decades in the metropolitan Washington region, major investments have been made to provide more transportation options to residents, businesses, and visitors.** Significant investments have been made in public transit as

LOOKING BACK TO LOOK AHEAD

The Washington region's transportation system has come a long way in 20 years, now we look ahead. We visualize our future by planning how we get there, together.

well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. New Metrorail stations and lines have been built. The Silver Line connects Largo Center to stations across DC, into Fairfax County—and soon, Loudoun County, opening up job access and bridging the East/West divide. The NOMA-Gallaudet station, once an idea, now serves a new thriving neighborhood near major job centers. An ever-increasingly connected trail network enables people to bike from Montgomery County to National Harbor or Alexandria, almost entirely on trails. The Wilson Bridge was replaced with a facility that now serves all types of travel. More recently, a new multimodal Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge replaced an aging structure over the Anacostia River, improving access to DC. New BRT and transitways have opened in Arlington County, Montgomery County, and DC, with many more planned. Expressways have been and continue to be added to the roadway system to enhance reliability. Investments in operations technologies and management help move and smooth traffic without adding roadway capacity. Road diets are a common way to make streets safe for everyone. Complete Streets are expected, not an anomaly.



The Present Day: Tracking Progress

The people, businesses, and visitors in the region look for a range of transportation options that meet their individual needs, that are safe, reliable, and easy to access. Together, the region plans and takes actions to realize a brighter future, with a transportation system that does its part to help the region thrive. **Although some challenges that are common in a growing region still remain, the region has made incredible improvements and continues to do well in many areas.** The Regional Transportation Survey reports that approximately 17 million trips are taken per day on all modes of transportation for all purposes, including travel to work, school, medical appointments, and other destinations. Over the past 10 years, for all trip types, bicycling has doubled, walking amounts remained steady, but transit use declined. For commute trips, shares of single occupancy vehicle and carpool trips decreased while other modes such as bus transit, walk, bicycle, and taxi/ridehail increased.

Air quality has improved dramatically. Based on the ozone and fine particles data from the air quality monitors, the air quality in our region has improved tremendously over the past 20 years and is expected to continue to improve into the future. As more and more workers have the option to work from home, teleworking has changed the landscape of transportation in this region by reducing the total number of people commuting to work, and telework has seen pandemic-fueled growth.

Looking Ahead

The TPB's transportation system performance forecast for 2045 shows, as the population and jobs increase in the region, they are expected to be increasingly guided into mixed-use developments in Activity Centers and near HCT station areas, as they have over the last 20 years. Already high access to transit and nonmotorized opportunities is forecast to improve further for most residents of our region. More people are expected to travel by carpool, transit, biking, and walking. A higher



THE POWER OF WORKING TOGETHER

The region has made progress toward its goals, but challenges remain. While we have further to go, together, we'll go far.

percentage of our region’s residents is expected to take advantage of the congestion-free travel on the more reliable high-capacity transit, nonmotorized, and express lane modes. TPB surveys show that if given the choice to return to a work location once the COVID-19 pandemic is over, two-thirds said their preference would be to telework some days and 38 percent said they will probably have different travel habits than before.

But, the performance analysis also shows, given the additional demand of more people and jobs added to current demand, delay and congestion on main travel corridors will continue to rise—but more slowly than if the transportation investments were not made. Reducing GHG emissions poses a challenge. Many people still lose their lives or are injured on the region’s roadways. The combined cost of housing and transportation puts a strain on the region’s residents quality of life.

Transportation agencies must spend about 81 percent of their budgets to maintain and operate the existing expansive system, with remaining funding called on to integrate its many parts, expand options, and improve safety, mobility, access and reliability for all. Together, our region can explore how to generate new funding and maximize existing funding.

When agencies develop projects, they need to- and do-address more than one goal area. But, projects can also make progress on a policy priority (such as improved mobility for historically disadvantaged populations) while

hindering another priority, such as reducing VMT and GHG. Overcoming challenges of funding, lengthy project development timelines, and the other hurdles of enhancing a transportation system in a region that is already built out, means implementation faces many challenges.

Over the last decade, the TPB’s numerous studies have pointed toward multimodal solutions to address challenges, alleviate congestion, improve reliability and safety, reduce transportation emissions, and provide real choices for people and businesses across the region. These studies led to the TPB-endorsed Aspirational Initiatives—planning concepts already underway in the region that the TPB seeks more of, sooner, as they have the potential to significantly improve the region’s transportation system performance compared to past plans and programs.

During the development of this plan, the TPB conducted activities to support the implementation of the Aspirational Initiatives to address the TPB’s entire policy framework, including a survey that explored potential impacts of the pandemic, transportation barriers and preferred enhancements. The TPB conducted focus

groups to hear perspectives of underrepresented populations, and, a QR-code based event to better understand how the types of projects aligned with the initiatives impact people’s lives. We heard that these projects make a real difference, and that the TPB needs to keep making progress on its aspirations.

The TPB conducted studies that focused on issues that impact the region’s ability to address many of its goals—equity, roadway safety, and climate change mitigation and resiliency. Each study identified key challenges and strategies to make progress. For example, the Transit Fare Equity study found that fare relief can increase ridership, could reduce the cost burden for many riders, and improve the safety of riders and operators. The TPB Safety Study revealed that EEAs contain 42 percent of the urban core’s population, yet they account for 59 percent of the urban core’s fatalities and identified strategies to reduce fatalities and injuries that occur on the region’s roadways. The *Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021* found no silver bullet to meet the region’s 2030 interim and 2050 climate goals, but identified the potential impacts of numerous multisectoral pathways that could help the region reduce the amount of GHG spilled into the air from transportation emissions.

Together, Our Region Can Take Action

This plan includes many projects, programs, and policies that advance TPB policy priorities, including the Aspirational Initiatives. But there’s more to do.

With challenges ahead, the region needs to prepare for the additional growth that we know is coming. As noted in COG’s *Region United* planning framework, which builds on several of the Aspirational Initiatives and other TPB efforts, “it is clear that our region needs to take collaboration to the next level to address a variety of interconnected and urgent challenges more effectively, including housing supply and affordability, transportation accessibility and mobility, climate



THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The region identifies and works together to overcome challenges, whether they be regional, national, or global.

change—as well as long-persisting racial inequities. And while these issues are daunting, there’s also growing consensus: if the challenges are interconnected, so are the solutions.”

While studies have informed solutions, the **TPB and COG are focused on strategy implementation**. Together, our region is bringing the slogan, ‘Think Regionally, Act Locally’ into action. Each jurisdiction and agency can take action by identifying the region’s priority strategies that work best at the local level and where possible, take steps to accelerate delivery. How projects, programs, and policies are implemented also matters, COG and the TPB call for strategies to have an equity lens. Recognizing that getting the most out of every dollar is necessary, planning and implementation activities can include considering how each investment can become an interconnected solution by examining opportunities to incorporate climate, land use, and other strategies into each solution.

Together, our region can continue to make headway on its goals as it establishes policies and makes investments in programs and projects for future generations.

When We Plan Together, We Prosper, Together.



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