

The TPB's Synthesized Policy Framework

Informing Planning for the Metropolitan Washington Region





Informing Planning for the Region

This document provides a synthesis of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Policy Framework. Its principles and goals should inform planning throughout the metropolitan Washington region. It should guide the projects, programs, and policies that are submitted for the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program's (TIP) constrained element and planning activities beyond the constrained element.

The projects, programs, and policies submitted by sponsoring agencies for the constrained element technical inputs solicitation should uphold the planning principles, advance one or more regional goals, and implement the TPB priority strategies to support desired performance outcomes as reflected in this summarized policy framework. Guidance on submitting inputs can be found in the Technical Inputs Solicitation Technical Guide.

The TPB Policy Framework

How we define principles, goals, strategies, and performance outcomes:

Principles

Principles are *values* that the TPB holds. An equitable transportation system is one that incorporates and upholds these principles or values.

Goals

What we as the TPB *aim to accomplish*.

Strategies

How we intend to accomplish our goals through multimodal transportation projects, programs, policies, and technologies.

Performance Measures

How we *determine the impact* of the planned strategies and if we have succeeded in advancing or reaching our goals.





The TPB Principles

Equity

The TPB has adopted equity as a key principle to promote fairness and justice. The TPB sees equity considerations as an integral part of all its principles, goals, and strategies. Equity in transportation includes affordable and readily available multimodal travel options throughout the region that enable safe, efficient, and equitable access to jobs, housing, services, and other destinations.

Accessibility

All people who use the transportation system in the region, including residents, visitors, and people with disabilities, should be granted reasonable physical and affordable access to travel by road, transit, biking, walking, micromobility, ferry, and to housing choices. The TPB seeks a broad range of public and private transportation options that maximize physical access and affordability for everyone and minimize reliance on a single mode.

Sustainability

Transportation infrastructure and programs in the region should be financially, structurally, and environmentally sustainable. Sustainability occurs through reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) and promoting regional connectivity and longevity based on growth patterns, projected demand, capacity, and technology. This

includes efficient use of energy, meeting or exceeding standards for air, water, land quality, and environmental protection. Also, retaining and preserving appropriate green space, public space, and historic and cultural resources are integral to a sustainable transportation network.

Prosperity

The National Capital Region's prosperity depends on growing a diversified, stable, and competitive economy that offers a wide range of employment opportunities. The regional transportation network should be an asset to attract high quality employers. It should minimize economic disparities and enhance the prosperity of each jurisdiction and the region through balanced growth and access to high quality jobs and education for all levels.

Livability

Vibrant, healthy, and safe neighborhoods are the heart of the region's livability. Livability revolves around a range of travel and housing choices that are affordable and accessible to all community resources, including services that promote health and wellness. The region's transportation network should continue partnerships within and between jurisdictions to manage emergencies, protect public health and safety, and support economic well-being.



The TPB Goals

Safety

The safety of all users, including travelers and maintenance and operations personnel alike, should be ensured on all parts of the transportation system at all times. To provide a safe transportation system:

- Maintain the system in a state of good repair.
- Incorporate safety in system design and operations, including emergency services.
- Communicate across numerous media platforms.
- Conduct ongoing transportation operator training and education.
- Provide ongoing traveler education and enforce corresponding transportation laws.

Maintenance

All aspects of the transportation system's infrastructure should be maintained in a state of good repair to provide reliable, safe, and comfortable mobility to all its users. Maintaining the existing system is a top priority that takes precedence over creating new systems. To maintain the existing system in a state of good repair:

- Conduct regular checkups and programmed maintenance to ensure roads provide a smooth and safe ride, bridges are trustworthy, buses, train cars, stations, and rails function reliably.
- Ensure bicycle paths and sidewalks are accessible and free of debris and obstacles.
- Proactively maintain transportation technology such as lights, signals, and signs, necessary for safe and efficient function of the entire system.

Reliability

Any and all options of travel available should be reliable to get the user to their destination on time every time.

To make travel reliable:

- Maintain and operate the system using effective technology.
- Reduce congestion on roadways and crowding on transit.
- Provide frequent service that is responsive to predictable changes in demand throughout the day.
- Make transit, biking, walking, micromobility, and expanding alternatives such as water travel competitive travel choices.

Affordable and Convenient

Provide affordable, realistic multimodal options:

- Offer convenient travel times, reasonable costs, and flexibility for commuters, including late-shift workers.
- Make it possible for travelers to choose from more than one type of mode for each leg of a trip.



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Efficient System Operations

Implement transportation systems management and operations:

- Apply technology for improved efficiency.
- Conduct integrated management practices.
- Plan for cross-agency incident response.

Environmental Protection

Provide, facilitate, and incentivize methods that build, operate and maintain the transportation system in a manner that provides for healthy air, water, and other environmental factors, and mitigates the climate change crisis. This goal includes meeting federal air quality standards and meeting the TPB's climate goals by reducing GHG emissions 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. To minimize negative environmental impacts:

- Actively encourage mode shift away from less climate-friendly modes like single occupancy vehicles, and provide an interconnected, equitable, affordable, and convenient multimodal system, with integrated services and technologies.
- Encourage and implement travel demand management strategies.
- Implement transportation vehicle and energy technologies that reduce emissions of pollutants including greenhouse gases.
- Facilitate regional collaboration toward the implementation of innovative strategies to reduce GHG emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change.

Resilient Region

The region's transportation system should remain able to move people in the face of one or more major obstacles to normal function. These obstacles could include extreme weather events, major crashes and incidents, and equipment or infrastructure failures. This goal includes becoming a Climate Ready Region and making significant progress by 2030. It also includes the need to incorporate equity principles and expand education on climate change into its members' actions to reach climate mitigation and resiliency goals. To build resiliency:

- Prepare contingency plans for operations and maintenance.
- Coordinate across sectors (transportation, land-use, environment) to implement strategies that address multiple community planning challenges.
- Provide options for travel and goods movement, design and use of technologies.

Livable and Prosperous Communities

Support regional economic competitiveness, opportunity, and a high quality of life for all people.

- Implement a range of strategies that help to achieve each of the TPB principles and goals.
- Support a high quality transportation system to attract businesses to the region.
- Shorten trips and minimize delay so that residents and visitors enjoy more time with family and friends.



How to Achieve TPB Goals: Implement Priority Strategies

The TPB has conducted numerous studies over the last decade to identify the most effective strategies (projects, programs, and policies) to achieve its goals as reflected in its long-range plans. All strategies prioritize a state of good repair.

When implemented by TPB member agencies, some strategies **must** be documented in the constrained element of the long-range transportation plan and TIP. These include any project, program or policy that impacts roadway or transit capacity—and could therefore affect air quality. Any project or program slated to receive federal funding must also be included.

However, the TPB’s priority strategies cannot all be reflected in the constrained element. Examples include most projects for walking and biking, land-use policies, and electrical vehicle charging stations. Many such strategies are reflected in other manners, such as in the TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, regional electrical vehicle coordination activities, electric vehicle infrastructure plans and other planning activities and investments documented at the state, regional, transit agency, and local level. The TPB will continue supporting priority strategies through feasible means.



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The TPB priority strategies associated with regional roadway safety, the Aspirational Initiatives, and greenhouse gas reduction are summarized below:

- Apply best practices to maintain the transportation system such as bridge and pavement management and transit asset management.
- Apply the endorsed safety strategies to design and operate safer infrastructure and encourage safer behavior.
- Increase frequency and capacity of transit by expanding Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways.
- Reduce travel times on all public transportation bus services.
- Move more people on Metrorail and commuter rail.
- Bring jobs and housing closer together by focusing growth and adding housing units in Activity Centers and near High-Capacity Transit stations.
- Provide more telecommuting and other options for commuting such as vanpool or carpool and alternative work schedules.
- Expand the express highway network, with rapid transit, and allow carpool/vanpool ride free.
- Improve walk and bike access to transit, especially within TPB identified High-Capacity Transit station areas, through the application of Complete Streets and Green Streets policies.
- Complete the National Capital Trail Network.
- Implement Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) measures at all eligible locations.
- Apply effective technologies that advance the TPB’s goals.
- Convert vehicles to clean fuels: 50 percent of new light-duty vehicles, 30 percent of medium and heavy-duty trucks sold; 50 percent of all buses on the road.
- Develop and implement an electric vehicle charging network.



The Impact: Measuring Performance

As TPB members plan and implement projects, programs, and policies that uphold the TPB principles and make progress on the goals, the TPB's LRTP will include many of these actions. The TPB evaluates each plan to assess how it impacts the regional transportation system performance and air quality. Using measures to evaluate mode share, job access by transit and auto, congestion and delay, GHG emissions, and more, the region can gain insights on how to continually improve performance with each plan.

With improved transportation system performance, people in the region will benefit from an improved quality of life. The region will experience the prosperity that stems from an accessible, equitable, and safe transportation system. The results of implementing priority TPB strategies at the local/agency level can lead to desired regional planning outcomes, such as:

- More affordable housing within proximity to jobs.
- More options for transit, bicycling, and walking.
- Shorter trips, reduced travel times and improved reliability.
- More efficient movement of freight and commercial goods.
- Improved economic competitiveness.
- Vibrant, mixed-use communities with equitable, accessible, safe choices.
- Less time commuting: more time for family and friends.
- Improved environmental health and a better climate.

The TPB principles, goals, and strategies align with and reflect the national goals and federal planning factors and planning priorities. Therefore, actions that support the TPB policy framework also respond to the federal planning requirements.



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board