

Chapter 1:

Introduction

The National Capital Region—encompassing the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia—is home to many communities that depend on a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation network for commuting, transporting goods, and navigating daily life. As one of the largest metropolitan areas within the 6th largest regional economy in the United States, the ability to move people and goods safely, reliably, and seamlessly within and through the region is critical for enhancing quality of life for everyone who lives, works, and visits the region and for sustaining economic vitality.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is federally designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is entrusted with the responsibility to develop a long-range transportation plan for the region. The TPB developed Visualize 2050 to meet the federal requirement for MPOs to develop a metropolitan transportation plan.

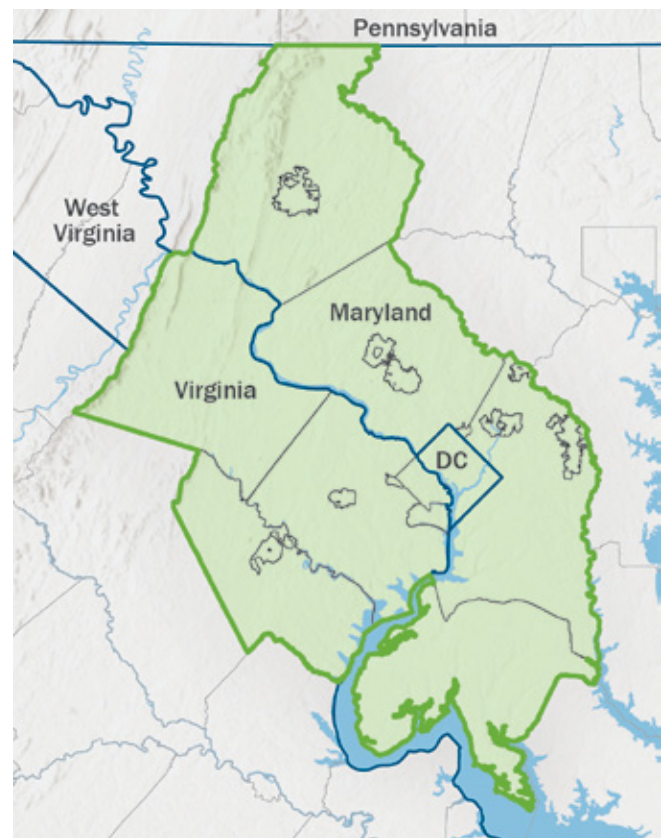


Cristina Finch/COG

The TPB's planning area, shown in Figure 1.1, spans approximately 3,500 square miles across 22 local jurisdictions and is formed by:

- Natural features including the watersheds of the Potomac River, the Anacostia River, and the Occoquan River.
- Two states, one district, eight counties, and 14 cities and towns.
- Decisions around development, land use, transportation infrastructure policies, and investment priorities.

Figure 1.1: National Capital Region Planning Area



At the center of the region is Washington, DC, home to the federal government and national and historic monuments that draw global attention. The National Capital Region's 5.9 million residents and 3.3 million employees are what make the region vibrant and prosperous.

The National Capital Region Transportation Plan

The TPB and its member agencies develop the region’s long-range, multimodal transportation plan looking at least 20 years into the future and update the plan at least once every four years to stay current on the changing nature of travel in the region. The plan, called Visualize, reflects a point-in-time of a robust, ongoing, and performance-based transportation planning and programming process.

A review of the process used to develop this latest version of the long-range plan, Visualize 2050, is documented under separate cover. The process document details the work behind the information shared within this plan. The TPB invites interested parties to read the “Visualize 2050 Planning and Programming Process” document available on the plan website, www.visualize2050.org, and learn about the extensive work that has taken place to inform this version of the plan and prepare the National Capital Region’s transportation system for the future.



BeyondDC/Flickr



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Visualize 2050

Developed between 2022 and 2025, Visualize 2050 documents the current state of transportation in the region, the many topics planners and engineers consider when analyzing transportation and related issues, the amount of money anticipated to be available through the plan’s horizon year (2050), and priority investments that will address challenges and enhance future travel by making it safer, faster, more convenient, and more reliable. In addition, the plan includes TPB’s policy framework including the vision statement, values, goals, priority strategies, performance measures, and targets for ongoing regional transportation planning.

The TPB’s Visualize 2050 goals align with the transportation goals in the District of Columbia’s *moveDC*, Maryland’s *The Playbook*, and Virginia’s *VTrans* plan and reflect the transportation goals of the nation as outlined through the federal Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

TPB’S VISION STATEMENT

The metropolitan Washington region remains a vibrant world capital, with a transportation system that provides efficient movement of people and goods. This system promotes the region’s economy and environmental quality and operates in an attractive and safe setting—it is a system that serves everyone. The system is fiscally sustainable, promotes areas of concentrated growth, manages both demand and capacity, employs the best technology, and joins rail, roadway, bus, air, water, pedestrian and bicycle facilities into a fully interconnected network.

TPB’S VALUES

ACCESSIBILITY All people who use the transportation system in the region should have reasonable physical and affordable access to travel by road, transit, biking, walking, micromobility, ferry, and to housing choices.

PROSPERITY The regional transportation network should be an asset to attract high quality employers, minimize economic disparities, and enhance each jurisdiction and the region through balanced growth and access to high quality jobs and education for all levels.

SUSTAINABILITY Transportation infrastructure and programs in the region should be environmentally, structurally, and financially viable.

AFFORDABILITY. Readily available multimodal travel options throughout the region that enable safe and efficient access to jobs, housing, services, and other destinations.

LIVABILITY Vibrant, healthy, and safe neighborhoods with a range of travel and housing choices that support economic well-being.

TPB’S GOALS



SAFETY Pursue the safety of all users, including travelers and maintenance and operations personnel alike, on every transportation mode.



WELL-MAINTAINED INFRASTRUCTURE Maintain the transportation system’s infrastructure 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.



TRAVEL TIME RELIABILITY Enable reliable travel times on all transportation options to get the traveler to their destination on time every time.



EFFICIENT SYSTEM OPERATIONS Implement efficient transportation systems management and operations within and across different travel modes.



AFFORDABLE AND CONVENIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS Provide affordable, practical multimodal options.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION Provide and incentivize methods that build, operate, and maintain the transportation system in a manner that provides for healthy air, water, other environmental factors, and mitigates the effects of extreme weather.



RESILIENT REGION Facilitate mobility for people in the face of one or more major obstacles to normal transportation system functionality. These obstacles could include extreme weather events, major crashes and incidents, and equipment or infrastructure failures.



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