



Visualize 2050 Planning and Programming Process

Pipelines and Waterways

Part 24 of 27



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OVERVIEW OF PIPELINES AND WATERWAYS

The National Capital Region’s multimodal transportation system is vital to the economy of the region and to the quality of life of its residents. It connects people and businesses to important regional activity centers and to major domestic and international markets.

The region’s multimodal freight transportation consists of various modal elements, including a pipeline network that carries more than 48 million tons of petroleum products per year. As the second most-used freight mode in the region, after truck freight, the pipeline network moves petroleum, natural gas, offshore well, and other commodities¹. By moving fuel through pipelines—fuel that is eventually placed on trucks and sent to gas stations—the pipeline network is essential to motor vehicle travel.

While the region does not have a port, various types of goods also reach consumers in the National Capital Region through nearby ports, such as the Port of Baltimore and the Port of Virginia, which are vital East Coast entry points for marine freight. These freight modes support the region’s livability and quality of living.

TPB’S ROLE AND KEY STAFF

The TPB works to ensure that freight is integrated into metropolitan planning so that the transportation system continues to be responsive to freight demands and evolving practices. While the TPB does not have programming specific to pipeline and maritime freight, the modes are acknowledged as part of the TPB’s overall freight activities. Since 2007, the TPB has included a regional freight planning task in its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with activities that identify freight in the transportation planning process, highlight freight’s role in economic development, and recognize freight’s integrated role in the multimodal economy.

The TPB’s freight program consists of various elements including a Freight Subcommittee, a National Capital Region Freight Plan, which is updated on regular intervals, and special freight forums and workshops. The TPB also responds to freight-related federal requirements for MPOs. Table 24.1 summarizes the key TPB staff who support the TPB’s freight planning activities. Currently, the program has a staff member who focuses on freight planning part-time and is supported by consultant assistance as needed.

TABLE 24.1: KEY STAFF

TPB Staff	Title	Role
Kanti Srikanth	Executive Director	Staff Director for the Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
Multimodal Planning Program Director (vacant)	Program Director	Contributor
Janie Nham	Planning Manager	Contributor

¹ Federal Highway Administration (2020). *Freight Analysis Framework*. https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/faf/

Role of TPB Subcommittees

The TPB's Freight Subcommittee serves a key function in the freight program by providing a forum for information sharing and coordination on freight topics. Established in 2008, the subcommittee engages a diverse audience, including private sector freight shippers and industry representatives, and has actively invited private sector representatives to present and share their perspectives. The subcommittee's bi-monthly meetings feature presentations that center on specific freight themes, and past meetings have featured presentations on maritime freight or supply chain and pipeline freight disruptions among others.

The subcommittee also makes recommendations on freight-related action items for consideration by the TPB Technical Committee and the Transportation Planning Board. Actions such as the designation of Critical Urban Freight Corridors or the adoption of the National Capital Region Freight Plan are first reviewed by the subcommittee before advancing to the TPB Technical Committee for review and the TPB for approval.

ROLE OF KEY PLANNING AGENCIES

Because of the broad nature of freight networks, the TPB engages planning agencies at various levels of government. The TPB frequently coordinates with staff from the three state governments in the region, as they own and maintain much of the infrastructure on which freight travels, such as ports. These state agencies include the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI). While the region does not have a port, the TPB engages relevant state agencies to keep abreast of developments at nearby ports, such as the Port of Baltimore and Port of Virginia, which serve as the entry point for certain types of goods to the region.

In addition to state agencies, the federal government establishes the legal and policy framework for freight operations and additionally provides funding, technical assistance, data, and data analysis tools to support freight planning activities at the state, regional, and local levels. In particular, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) establishes national policy on pipelines and hazardous materials transport, sets and enforces standards, conducts research to prevent incidents, and prepares first responders. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) works in areas involving ships and shipbuilding, port operations, vessel operations, national security, the environment, and safety.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The TPB does not specifically seek public engagement on pipelines and waterways but receives and incorporates public input on freight received through regularly occurring TPB, Technical Committee, and Freight Subcommittee meetings. The TPB's Community Advisory Committee (CAC) also receives updates on freight activities and is provided with the opportunity to share feedback during briefings. In addition to these venues, the TPB occasionally holds special forums on freight topics, such as the 2024 Regional Curbside Management Forum, in which members of the CAC and TPB Access for All Advisory Committee are sometimes invited to participate. These events are also open to the public.

Unlike other transportation sectors, freight movement is highly dependent on private-sector partners such as railroad companies, parcel delivery services, and trucking companies. The TPB has worked to develop relationships with and involve private-sector stakeholders in program activities to foster greater public-private collaboration.