VISUALIZE 2050

National Capital Region Transportation Plan

Visualize 2050 Public Comments Summary

National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

December 2025

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OVERVIEW

The TPB conducted three public comment periods during the development of the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The comments were shared with the TPB at their meeting following the comment period. That information has been compiled, and this document provides the summaries of the Visualize 2050 three public comment periods as presented to the TPB at these meetings:

- 2025 Public Comment Period Summary on December 17, 2025
- 2024 Public Comment Period Summary shared on April 17, 2024
- 2023 Public Comment Period Summary on December 20, 2023

2025 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY

The third and final public comment period took between October 23, 2025 and November 21, 2025. The public had the opportunity to comment on the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan, the FY 2026-2029 TIP, and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report.

SUMMARY OF NUMBER OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

Platforms for Commenting	Number of Comments Received by Platform
Speaking at the November 2025 TPB Meeting	1
Sending an email to tpbcomment@mwcog.org	193
Writing to the TPB Chair	0
Using the form online: mwcog.org/visualize2050	38
Calling the TPB Public Comment Line at 202-962-3774 and leaving a 3-minute voice mail.	0

Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan and the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Comments

Most public comments fell into the following categories:

- Rail/Bus/Bicycle/Pedestrian Expansion
- Requests for a more ambitious plan that sets higher goals
- Opposition to roadway widenings
- Public health and safety
- Climate change
- Technical comments

Rail, Bus, Bike Lane, and Pedestrian Expansion

Commenters urged the TPB to reallocate funding for highway expansion and toll lane projects in favor of reliable, multi-modal, and multi-jurisdictional transit that provides opportunities for economic growth. This includes expanding the Tourism section in the plan beyond DC to include Virginia and Maryland (e.g., VRE, MARC). Ideas for public transportation improvements supported

by commenters included expanding schedules, investing in track improvements and travel times, offering express services, and coordinating local jurisdictions to improve overall experience and quality. This included making a commitment to open data in the "Emerging Technologies" section so that it is easier for people to plan and purchase trips. Commenters request that the TPB be more ambitious with VPRA and MTA/MARC track expansions. Commenters also supported the development of a highspeed rail system and the proposed bike and pedestrian projects detailed in the plan.

Coalition for Smarter Growth and The Climate Mobilization both supported commuter connections programs (e.g., carpooling, telecommuting, transit with bus and rail) and encouraged the TPB to hold member jurisdictions accountable for their roles in promoting and implementing climate goals.

One commenter requested that the report include ferry service, and one commenter requested to expand bus service further on I-95 south.

Example Excerpts:

- The wasteful highway expansions in Visualize 2050 will likewise undermine the regions major transit and rail investments in the plan, including bus rapid transit lines, Long Bridge, MARC and VRE investments, and the Purple Line.
- How many more people would visit Baltimore from DC for dinner or an event if the MARC trip were an express 30-minute ride rather than 60? This is an untapped economic opportunity for Baltimore.
- Similarly, it is good the plan recognizes and incorporates bridge rehabilitation explicitly as a core element.
- But nobody will be inspired if we limit our imagination. We have lots of examples around the world to draw from. Let's take the best of the best and give the people of this region, and of this country, something to be proud of that truly revolutionizes the way people navigate a greater metropolitan area.
- To truly meet our accessibility and climate goals, the plan should prioritize high-frequency bus service, bus-priority infrastructure, and safer walking and biking connections to transit, especially in equity-emphasis areas. And because regional mobility doesn't stop at jurisdictional borders, Visualize 2050 should explicitly support improved VREMARC connectivity and more frequent, all-day passenger rail. These are the investments that deliver real reliability, real regionalism, and real equity for the people who rely on transit every day.

Request for More Ambitious Plan

Commenters generally supported the current draft of Visualize 2050 and the FY 2026-2029 TIP but urged the TPB to set more ambitious transportation goals. Commenters note that a 2-3 percent reduction in car trips, 3 percent reduction in "drive alone" trips, and $30 billion allocated to roadway expansion projects go against the plan's vision statement.

With the current draft of the plan, commenters state that it is unclear if any chronic transportation bottlenecks will ever be resolved and urge the TPB to be creative and plan for a world where citizens are not required to own and maintain a car for reliable transportation. Roadway expansions do not solve traffic issues, and the plan needs to account for the impacts associated with induced demand (i.e., widening highways leads to more driving and traffic over time). Residents are not benefiting from the proposed changes.

The plan needs better ideas and specific details on the potential expansion of, and investments in, railways, metro, regional bus services, safe bikeways, and pedestrian walkways. This includes

making public transit competitive in terms of cost and time, linking congestion relief to economic development (e.g., improved multi-modal options and targeted congestion relief improves quality of life and allows employers to attract and retain talent), expanding high-capacity transit service to outer jurisdictions, and investing in equitable access to high-capacity transit. Commenters encourage TPB to work in coordination with adjacent regions.

Example Excerpts:

- We need to inspire the citizens of this area with the vision of a transportation network that's second to none. That will come with a price tag and require a commitment to accelerating the ridiculously long processes that led to a 30 year plus time horizon -- from planning to build-out -- of the purple line.
- The regions continued reliance on traditional automobiles and small trucks contributes significantly to unhealthy air and global warming. To reduce reliance on these vehicles, the region needs to make walking, biking, and use of public transit, including bus, BRT, commuter rail, METRO rail and light rail, more attractive than driving. Only then will people choose transit over driving as their preferred mode of transportation.
- Our view is that the Visualize 2050 plan is insufficient to address the climate emergency our region is facing, and different actions need to be taken to help us navigate the challenges.

Roadway Widenings

Commenters applauded the TPB for voting to exclude the I-495 Southside Express Lanes project from the plan. Over 160 commenters (including those submitted as part of a letter writing campaign) encouraged the TPB to remove any roadway and highway widening or extension projects from this plan (most notably the Moore-Hogan toll lanes). Roadway widening and toll lane expansions only increase the number of vehicles on the road, which in turn increases air pollution, makes communities car-dependent, and only benefits those that can afford to pay the tolls.

Commenters also rejected public-private partnerships for toll roads. Commenters stated that using a for-profit partner is a short-sited, bad deal for governments and taxpayers that will lead to jeopardized road safety. Commenters urged the TPB to reallocate the funding from highway expansion projects, which will only lead to more congestion and bottlenecks, to multi-modal transportation solutions.

Three commenters supported prioritizing vehicle traffic efficiency over "under-utilized bike and bus lanes," one commenter specifically mentioning Frederick, MD.

Example Excerpt:

The toll lanes will not alleviate traffic congestion. Instead they will make travel on these major highways inequitable, only offering routes with less traffic to drivers who can afford to pay high toll prices. And they will create new bottlenecks, just as they have on I-95 and I-495 in Virginia. These toll lanes will not reduce traffic in Maryland. MDOT should instead invest in public transit; that would truly reduce traffic congestion and give Marylanders options other than driving their personal vehicles to their destinations

Public Health and Safety

Commenters encouraged the TPB to ensure that "safety outcomes carry equal weight to congestion reduction in project selection and funding, as a transportation system that is not safe for all users cannot be considered successful." Commenters requested that counties enforce laws on cellphone usage while driving and walking, discuss the quality of public transit in regard to homeless persons living in metro stations, and strive for complete streets everywhere. One

commenter stated that the plan falls short on incorporating public health throughout all the sections of the plan.

Example Excerpt:

- *Prince William County recently adopted its first Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan, rooted in a Vision Zero approach that prioritizes engineering, enforcement, and education. I commend TPB for elevating safety as a performance measure within Visualize 2050 and for supporting the Regional Roadway Safety Program and the Street Smart Campaign.*

Climate Change

Visualize 2050 needs to make more progress on climate change. Coalition for Smarter Growth stated that "*if the current US DOT guidelines suggest TPB can't do [greenhouse gas] reduction work for transportation and provide accountability, then the work should be moved to [the Council of Governments (COG)]*." Multiple commenters stated that the plan would make it impossible for the region to meet the COG greenhouse gas reduction targets and does nothing to address the impending climate emergency.

Commenters stated that the proposed highway expansions will only increase the vehicles on the road, leading to more vehicular pollution, which is already the leading source of carbon pollution in the region. While emissions and vehicle travel miles will slightly decrease under this plan, commenters requested that the TPB be more aggressive. Commenters encouraged the TPB to embrace their 2030 climate-friendly targets of reducing vehicle carbon emissions by 20 percent and trucks by 50 percent. Commenters also noted that more paved surfaces will only lead to more flooding problems.

Example Excerpts:

- *Due to the prioritization of road expansion over demand management, transit-oriented land use, transit and active transportation investments, Visualize 2050 falls short of the emissions reductions needed for COGs climate targets, even with a shift to EVs. The Visualize 2050 plan makes no mention of climate change, and TPB has not yet followed through on work to advance greenhouse gas reduction strategies in its UPWP.*

Technical Comments

Some commenters provided specific comments on the plan process, framework, and content. This included comments on using maps to show how targets are met in the plan and references to specific tables and figures. One commenter noted TPB's zero-based budgeting checkmark evaluation done for the conformity inputs yielded many contradictory results.

Example Excerpts:

- *I support CMAQ spending for DDOT, VDOT, and MDOT as listed in Table 21 of the draft FY26-29 STIP.*

Air Quality Determination Comments

There were two comments received regarding the AQC determination process. The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) submitted the following comment:

The Visualize 2050 plan continues to require the use of safety margins to meet the MVEBs and demonstrate conformity for volatile organic compounds (VOC) in 2025 and 2030. MWAQC urges TPB and its members to give particular focus to projects that would reduce air pollution emissions from the transportation sector so that future emissions from that sector remain below the MVEBs without safety margins to fully protect the health of our residents. The draft Design Value data for ozone for the Washington region for the period 2023 through 2025 is 69 ppb parts per billion (ppb). This shows that the region is in compliance with the 2015 ozone NAAQS, however the region needs to continue reducing its emissions to maintain this compliance in the future. The projected year 2025 emissions inventory for the region in the above maintenance plan update submitted to EPA in 2023 shows on-road sources to be a significant contributor (26 percent) of NOx emission in the region. Therefore, it is essential that the region reduces its emissions further in order to keep complying with the 2015 ozone NAAQS from all sources, including on-road mobile sources. MWAQC notes that the region also is experiencing an increase in total VMT along with an increase in population and job growth. Therefore, we urge TPB's continued investment in VMT and emission reduction strategies such as public transit, ride-sharing, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, other travel demand management strategies, and Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMS) to reduce future growth in vehicle emissions.

In addition to MWAQC, the Southern Environmental Law Center stated that the Air Quality Conformity analysis showed that the additional lane miles included in the TIP and Long-Range Plans fail to put the region on track to meet the COG commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050.

Specific Projects Comments

congestion at known bottlenecks through public transportation investments, opposition to highway expansion projects, and support for safe bike routes, pedestrian walkways, and bridges. Some examples of the areas and projects include, but are not limited to:

- Prince William County (I-95, Exit 160; Route 1; Prince William Parkway; I-66; Rt. 28).
- Pedestrian improvements along New Braddock Road and Braddock Road
- Expansions for MD 355, Georgia Avenue, US 50, Dulles Airport Access Road
- Crystal City DCA Bridge
- New BRT Expansions
- MARC Services, Purple Line
- Orange Line Extension to Fair Oaks
- New Rail Bridge over the Occoquan River
- Bus service in Chevy Chase DC, Barnaby Woods, and Hawthorne

Example Excerpts:

- The Chevy Chase DC, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne neighborhoods of upper NW DC would benefit greatly from enhanced and more frequent bus service. It's an area with a sizable senior population, some of whom find it difficult to drive. Frequent, convenient, and accessible bus service would benefit all residents of this section of DC. It would allow them to shop, visit doctors, and engage in their recreational activities more easily.

- Keep OmniRide and VRE in good order. These are gaining popularity.
- Give Alexandria its West End Transitway. The city is a veritable anthill of pedestrians and happy folk cruising the river or riding the free bus. It's an economic powerhouse that helps pay for the projects on your list. By all means, give them a Fourth Rail Track.
- On no account should Rt 50 be widened. The plan as it stands meets no TPB priority strategies, which is a major clue that it's wrong for us. Use the STARS study to better understand what is needed. Frankly, I have never encountered any traffic flow issue there and I use it all the time.

Response to Comments

TPB Staff Observation for Rali/Bus/Bike Lane/Pedestrian Expansion Comments

The TPB staff have provided these comments to the members of the TPB and their technical agencies who are responsible for project implementation. Please note that there are multimodal investments that are not outlined in detail as they are non-regionally significant for use in the air quality conformity analysis, and instead are captured in general funding categories in the Visualize 2050 financial plan.

TPB Staff Observation for More Ambitious Plan Comments

Visualize 2050 forecasts positive shifts in mode choice given the growth anticipated for the region over the next 25 years. As cleaner fuel vehicles enter the vehicle fleet over time, the TPB expects this transition to provide the greatest impact on emissions reductions. The TPB continues to work with its regional partners to identify new funding sources, particularly in the area of transit resulting from DMV*Moves*, to support more multimodal transportation investments in the future. As a forum for regional planning, the TPB will continue to guide its regional partners towards achieving shared values and goals for multimodal transportation to be more accessible throughout the region.

TPB Staff Observation for Roadway Widening Comments

The TPB's planning area covers a large area – about 3,500 square miles and includes a large roadway network with more than 17,000 lane miles of different functional classes (Interstates, major and minor arterials, local roads, etc.) The roadway network serves thousands of communities – residential, commercial, mixed use, which generate large number of vehicular trips – about 18M (including transit trips) for work and non-work purposes and logs about 97M vehicle miles in a typical day. Several operating conditions at the community/local levels related to safety, congestion, connectivity, and access merit attention and extending or widening a segment of a roadway are at times what the local transportation agency determines to be the best solution.

TPB Staff Observation for Public Health and Safety Comments

TPB staff have noted these technical comments and continue to implement the safety initiatives that stem from TPB's Regional Roadway Safety Summit, some of which are also related to public health.

TPB Staff Observation for Climate Change Comments

The TPB is required to adhere to federally required work activities in adopting its long-range transportation plans and TIP. TPB is federally required to determine if the emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds and Nitrogen Oxides from the plan conform to the federally approved levels for this region, which is done as part of the air quality conformity determination. At this time, there are no federal requirements for MPOs, like the TPB, to undertake activities focused on climate change and/or greenhouse gases. Climate change and GHG emissions are not discussed

in Visualize 2050, consistent with USDOT advice to strictly adhere to federally required work activities.

As presented to the TPB on July 16, 2025, on-road GHG emissions for Visualize 2050 are forecast to be 22 percent below 2005 levels in 2030 and 33 percent below 2005 levels in 2050.[1] Although GHG emissions are projected to be lower in the future than today, the predicted GHG emissions do fall short of meeting the voluntary goals adopted by the TPB through R18-2022 in June 2022, which is not surprising. Visualize 2050 was not expected to meet the TPB's on-road transportation sector GHG reduction goals.

The GHG reduction goals that the TPB adopted could be considered aspirational, since the principal study on the subject, the TPB's Climate Change Mitigation Study (CCMS) of 2021, failed to find a pathway for the region to meet the TPB's 2030 GHG reduction goal. The CCMS studied over 30 GHG reduction scenarios for each analysis year (2030 and 2050), examining combinations of voluntary and mandatory actions affecting travel behavior and mode choice as well as improvements in vehicle fuels and technology. A couple of the studied/modeled scenarios did attain the 2050 goal, but that was mainly driven by the scenarios based on very ambitious vehicle electrification assumptions, some of which also included very aggressive mode shift and travel behavior (or VMT reduction) strategies, many of which would require legislation to be enacted.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) continues its climate change mitigation work on behalf of the region. COG recently submitted its Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for the region that was developed with funding from EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program. The CCAP reflects the climate change mitigation work conducted by the TPB, and includes a scenario with aggressive, but feasible, mitigation strategies to put the region on a pathway to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

In early 2026, COG expects to complete a mid-course review of the Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan along with the 2023 Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. The 2020 inventory showed that the region met its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for milestone year 2020.

TPB Staff Observation for Technical Comments

TPB staff have noted these technical comments and have made changes in the plan documents as needed.

TPB Staff Observation for Air Quality Determination Comments

The TPB appreciates MWAQC's concurrence that the Air Quality Conformity analysis of Visualize 2050 Plan and FY 2026-2029 TIP meets all the required emissions tests. The TPB notes that even under the current circumstances, on-road vehicular emissions are well within the levels needed for the region to maintain compliance with the 2008 ozone national Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). It is also noted that on-road vehicular source emissions have steadily declined over the past couple of decades, and are forecast to continue to decline, both overall, and as a percentage of the whole inventory. The TPB agrees that there should be a greater effort to reduce emissions across all sectors to meet current and future tougher air quality NAAQS. The TPB agrees with MWAQC on the need for greater investment in public transit, ridesharing, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and other programs to reduce emissions.

[1] National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (July 16, 2025). *Finalization of Project Inputs for Air Quality Conformity Analysis: Visualize 2050 & FY 2026-2029 TIP.* https://www.mwcog.org/events/2025/7/16/transportation-planning-board/ *For example, on slide 19, Slide 19: GHG emissions are forecast to go from 23.4M metric tons per year in 2005 to 18.4M metric tons per year in 2030, which implies a 22% drop.*

Specific Projects Comment Responses

The TPB staff provided specific project comments to the technical agencies who are responsible for project implementation.

2024 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY

The 2024 comment period took place for 30 days throughout the month of March. A total of 893 comments were received. The channels from which the comments came are summarized in the table below.

2024 COMMENT PERIOD COMMENTS RECEIVED

	MetroQuest Comment Form	*TPB Website Comment Form*	*Phone*	*Email*	*Letter*	*In Person at TPB's March 2024 Meeting*	*Total*
Number of Respondents	823	0	0	48	16	6	893

MetroQuest Form – Air Quality Conformity (AQC) Analysis Process Comments

This section details the responses received to the second slide of the MetroQuest comment form which informed participants about the TPB's AQC process. On this slide, participants were asked whether they had any comments about the AQC process. Of the 823 individual participants, 110 answered "Yes" and left a comment and 274 answered "No"; 416 people did not respond to this question. The submitted comments are attached.

There were several themes in the comments on the AQC process and can be summarized as follows:

- **Suggestions to consider:** Tire dust, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), CO2 emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle weight, traffic jams, traffic light sequencing, the positive effects transit and active transportation can have on air quality, and the effects of induced automobile demand on air quality.
- **Request for:** Additional insight on the method of the TPB's AQC process.
- **Skepticism about:** The positive impact that HOV/HOT lanes will have on the region's air quality.
- **Requests to:** Conduct various alternative scenario analyses that consider other project lists, along with alternative supportive land uses.

MetroQuest Form – Project Comments

The focal points of the MetroQuest form are the proposed project inputs on screens 3 and 4. The first map showed participants the transit, capacity reduction, new/extended roadways, and HOV/HOT/express lane projects. The second map showed participants the roadway widening/grade separation, relocation/reconstruction, interchange/intersection/ramp improvement, and new/widened bridge projects. Both maps only included projects that are significant for air quality conformity and are expected to be completed in 2026 or later. Participants could navigate the maps using a zoom-in function. After clicking on a project point,

participants were asked if they support the inclusion of the project in Visualize 2050. To learn more details about the projects, participants were directed to Visualize2050.org where a project summary table was linked with detailed project information packets. Two tables are attached; one shows how many people were in favor or opposition to a particular project and the second provides the responses for each project.

A statistical sampling method was not employed for the MetroQuest comment form and participation was open to any interested party. Therefore, the MetroQuest results cannot be considered statistically representative of the views of the region.

The following table summarizes the feedback, **resulting from the open comment opportunity and are not statistically representative of the region**, and shows general sentiments are most closely aligned with project type rather than the application of the project type at a particular location.

METROQUEST PROJECT COMMENTS SUMMARY TABLE

Project Type by MQ project category	Number of Projects "Favor"	Number of Projects "Not in Favor"	Total Projects in Category	% of Projects Favored
Capacity Reduction	19	0	**19**	**100%**
HOV/HOT/Express Lanes	0	9	**9**	**0%**
Intersection/ Interchange/Ramp Improvements	2	6	**8**	**25%**
New/Widened Bridge	0	1	**1**	**0%**
New/Extended Roadway	0	31	**31**	**0%**
Reconstruction	1	1	**2**	**50%**
Roadway Widening/Grade Separation	2	57	**59**	**3%**
Transit	25	0	**25**	**100%**
Total	**49**	**105**	**154**	**32%**

MetroQuest Form – General Comments Submitted

One-hundred and forty-eight unique comments were received on the general comment portals via the MetroQuest comment form. These can be summarized as follows:

- **Support for:** increased transit, cyclist and pedestrian facilities. Concerns that few such projects were in the plan.
- **Air Quality and health:** The plan does not adequately consider local public health impacts such as emissions from roadway operations or localized hot-spot emissions.
- **Climate change:** The plan does not adequately reflect the greenhouse gas reductions called for in TPB's policies.
- **Induced demand:** Road expansions often lead to more vehicles and traffic, not less. Investments should favor multimodal transit options over road widening.

- **Pedestrian safety:** More pedestrian infrastructure is needed, especially in high-incident areas near schools and residential zones. The use of right-turn-on-red signs should be minimized.
- **Road widening projects:** These were generally viewed negatively referencing a possible increase in congestion and emissions.
- **Express toll lane projects:** Many people expressed opposition to these projects citing concerns that they don't reduce congestion and potentially create new bottlenecks where they end; concerns about environmental harm and equity due to policies around use.
- **Transit investments:** Questions are raised about the lack of transit investments in the face of numerous road widening projects.
- **Several people offered additional or preferred solutions such as:**
    1. Implement tolls on all highway lanes without expanding them.
    2. Increase the use of speed and red-light cameras, including point-to-point average speed cameras.
    3. Eliminate all road-widening projects from the plan; divert to transit.

Email Comments

A total of forty-eight emails were received by the end of the comment period. Of these, two were unique comments, one was a cover memo transmitting a letter, and the rest were comments in favor of the Virginia transportation projects. Of the 48 comments received in favor of the Virginia projects, most consisted of a form letter or form letter variation that urged the TPB to approve Virginia's transportation project submissions, as well as the American Legion Bridge and I-270, the Capital Beltway, I-95, regional rail upgrades for VRE and MARC, and a regional BRT network.

One form letter variation urged the TPB to remember that their primary mission is to improve transportation performance. Others specifically mentioned support of the bi-directional express lanes.

Of the two other emails, one email called on the TPB to reconsider the list and include projects that reflect regional and local climate goals such as Route 7 rapid transit; and remove projects that do not align with these goals, such as highway expansions. The other extended appreciation for removal of the Mid-County Highway Extended.

Letter Comments

A total of sixteen commenters provided letters. Two from Virginia House Delegates in support of Virginia's projects. Ten were from coalitions and groups, including: the League of Women Voters (MD); MD Advocates for Sustainable Transportation; Citizens Against Beltway Expansion; Don't Widen 270; the Coalition for Smarter Growth; the Northern Virginia Transportation Coalition; South Tuckerman Inverness Citizens Association; Seneca Creek Watershed Partners; the Greater Washington Partnership, and the Sierra Club- MD Chapter.

Commenters expressed support and opposition for toll lane projects on I-95, I-495, and I-270. There were four individual commenters, two of which wrote in opposition to the VA Route 15 project north of Leesburg. General themes from the letter comments included the following:

- Overall support of increased road capacity projects in VA and MD.
- The Air Quality Conformity Analysis doesn't comply with the Board's resolutions regarding Greenhouse Gas reductions.
- There are too many capacity-increasing road projects and not enough transit/non-motorized projects.
- Concerns regarding equity in the planning process, and possible health effects of projects.
- Environmental impacts of road projects.

- Support of multimodalism.

Response to Comments

In response to comments, TPB staff developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handout. Additionally, agencies have been given the opportunity to provide a response to comments. The Virginia Department of Transportation, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County provided responses in letter formats.

2023 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY

Between February 15 at 12:00 PM and November 30 at midnight, there was a total of 997 project comments for the Visualize 2050 Initial Project List Feedback Form. Virginia received 514 comments, Maryland received 406 comments, and the District of Columbia received 77 comments. A total of 136 project suggestions were received, with 43 for Virginia, 40 for Maryland, and 10 for the District of Columbia. Most survey participants learned about the projects through advocacy organizations.

The overarching themes during the entire comment period are similar to the overarching themes of the mid-year summary:

• There is strong negative sentiment towards roadway widening and expansion projects. There are concerns that roadway widening and expansion induces more automobile travel, contributes to climate impact, undermines public transit, and misallocates money and resources.

• There is strong positive sentiment towards passenger rail expansion and improvements, bus improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, and BRT projects. This support comes from enthusiasm for reducing car dependence in the region, advancement towards climate goals, and improving access and connectivity for alternative modes.

• For many projects that received "agree" for inclusion into the 2050 plan, there was support for roadway improvements that include traffic calming features, but desires for more bicycle, pedestrian, or bus infrastructure improvements.

OP LANES MARYLAND PHASE 1

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Op Lanes Maryland Phase 1	1	1	1	4	173	2	182

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most individuals commenting expressed strong negative sentiment for the Op Lanes Maryland Phase 1, citing concerns about environmental and historic resource degradation, equity and cost burden, and skepticism about its ability improve congestion over time. Many commenters believe that the project will adversely affect the region's ability to reach its climate goals. Some comments expressed concerns about the public-private partnership approach and hesitancy to involve a private entity. Other comments criticized the public participation process for the project for a lack of transparency. Individuals who did not support the project suggested investing in mass transit, transit-oriented development, and telework policies as alternatives.

A small minority of commenters expressed neutrality, or approval of the project as proposed in Visualize 2045. These comments supported the project to address bottlenecks at the American Legion Bridge, and to support transit or carpooling.

LONG BRIDGE VA – DC

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Long Bridge VA - DC	44	0	0	0	0	1	45

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

The comments received on the Long Bridge VA – DC expressed overwhelming positive sentiment toward the project. The comments emphasized the regional significance of the project for positive impact on passenger rail and freight transportation. Many commenters also supported the pedestrian and bike component of the project. Some commenters mentioned that they support the project because of its anticipated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. There was also enthusiasm for improved connectivity between Virginia and the District of Columbia.

I-270 INNOVATIVE CONGESTION MANAGEMENT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
I-270 Innovative Congestion Management	3	1	0	1	33	0	38

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments received for the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project expressed negative sentiment to highway expansions and tolls. Many commenters cite concerns with negative impacts to the environment or quality of life. Many respondents expressed skepticism about the project's efficacy to address congestion. Respondents noted that induced demand would result in temporary congestion relief. In addition, feedback was critical of toll lanes as an inequitable solution that provides congestion relief to those who can pay. Many commenters suggested that alternatives such as mass transit, transit-oriented development, telework policies, and other traffic calming measures should be considered to reduce congestion and reach climate goals. Some people supported congestion pricing without highway widening, suggesting a design with reversible lanes.

There were four comments that expressed support for the project to address congestion and safety on I-270. Individuals cite the success of similar projects to support their comments.

MARC IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
MARC Improvements	25	2	0	0	0	0	27

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All of the comments received expressed positive, or strong positive sentiment towards the MARC Improvements as a regionally significant project. Commenters highlighted the importance of improving MARC to meet climate goals, improve air quality, and reduce congestion. Feedback about desired MARC improvements including all-day, weekend, and bidirectional service on all MARC lines. There was also enthusiasm for the potential for congestion to be reduced as a result of MARC improvements.

DISTRICT-WIDE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
District-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Management Program	19	2	0	0	2	0	23

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

The comments received on the District-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Management Program largely represented a strong positive sentiment. Commenters supported more bike and pedestrian infrastructure to improve safety outcomes, connectivity, and reduce automobile dependence.

Several comments expressed negative sentiment towards the District-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Management Program with concerns about traffic impacts, and safety implications.

UNION STATION TO GEORGETOWN STREETCAR LINE

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Union Station to Georgetown Streetcar Line	19	0	1	1	1	0	22

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments received expressed a strong positive sentiment towards the Union Station to Georgetown Streetcar Line, citing its potential to alleviate congestion and support climate goals. Many respondents noted the importance of more coverage, and high frequency service to encourage ridership. Some people expressed neutral or negative sentiment towards the project concerning congestion or alternative modes of public transportation.

DUKE STREET BRT DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Duke Street BRT Design & Construction	16	1	0	0	0	0	17

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received on the Duke Street BRT Design & Construction project expressed positive, or strong positive sentiment. Respondents expressed support for BRT as a cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally sustainable solution to address congestion, advance climate goals, and promote safety along a major corridor.

DULLES AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD PROJECT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Dulles Airport Access Road Project	0	0	0	1	15	0	16

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All of the comments received about the Dulles Airport Access Road Project expressed strong negative sentiment. Most comments express concern that expanding roadway capacity on the Dulles Airport Access Road would undermine the region's investment in the Silver Line. Others noted their concerns that the project will induce more automobile travel and deviate the region from its climate goals.

MD 355 BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit	15	0	1	0	0	0	16

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments express strong positive sentiment for the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit Project. All comments emphasize the importance of BRT on MD 355 to address congestion. Some respondents support the project's ability to improve mobility from Bethesda to Rockville – noting that it would reduce transfers and complement travel along the Red Line. Some comments

support BRT as a cost-effective strategy that benefits climate goals, equity, and mobility without a car.

One comment expressed a neutral stance and suggested that RideOn Bus 30's pre-pandemic schedule be restored.

DASH SERVICE EXPANSION

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
DASH Service Expansion	14	1	0	0	0	0	15

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received on the DASH Service Expansion project expressed positive or strong positive sentiments. Many respondents support expanding public transportation through better frequencies and updating fleets. The public comments anticipate that improved service will encourage people to use transit and reduce congestion.

BRUNSWICK LINE

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Brunswick Line	13	1	0	0	0	0	14

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

The majority of comments express a positive or strongly positive sentiment towards the Brunswick Line project. Respondents' desired improvements include improved frequency (including weekends), bidirectional service, and direct service to BWI. Many comments express support for improved rail service as a key strategy to reduce congestion.

MONTROSE PARKWAY

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Montrose Parkway	0	0	1	0	13	0	14

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments express strong negative sentiment towards the Montrose Parkway project. Many comments state concern that the project will continue to divide the White Flint neighborhood, promote car dependency, and negatively impact the environment. Some respondents suggested alternative investments in protected bike lanes, MD 355 BRT, and the local street network.

One comment had a neutral stance towards the project but noted that the project was previously presented as a new road. They noted that the project map in ProjectInfoTrak displayed a segment crossing railroad tracks, which they stated was extremely dangerous.

VEIRS MILL BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Veirs Mill Bus Rapid Transit	12	0	0	0	0	1	13

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All of the comments received about the Veirs Mill Bus Rapid Transit project expressed strong positive sentiment. Most comments emphasize the need for east-west transit routes, and

support BRT as a cost-effective mass transit option. Respondents also believe that expanding BRT will alleviate congestion, citing existing density and high transit ridership along the corridor.

ALEXANDRIA 4TH TRACK

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Alexandria 4th Track	13	0	0	0	0	0	13

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All of the comments received about the Alexandria 4th Track project expressed strong positive sentiment. Respondents expressed support for improving rail travel via VRE, MARC, and Amtrak in the region.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT: US 29 – PHASE 2

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Bus Rapid Transit: US 29 - Phase 2	12	0	0	0	1	0	13

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments expressed strong positive sentiment towards the Bus Rapid Transit: US 29 – Phase 2 project. Respondents support BRT to reduce congestion on US 29, improve environmental quality, reach climate goals, and provide an affordable transportation alternative.

One comment expressed strong negative sentiment towards the project, citing disapproval for the dedicated median lane alternative. The respondent expressed support for the managed lane option citing concern about cost and congestion.

US 29 WIDENING PROJECT (ECL CITY OF FAIRFAX (VIC. NUTLEY ST.) TO CAPITAL BELTWAY)

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
US 29 Widening Project	0	0	0	1	12	0	13

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments for this project showed negative sentiment. There are concerns that widening US 29 will only increase automobile demand while making the road more unsafe for other roadway users. There is also mention that the recent dense and mixed-use developments along the corridor are not compatible with a widened roadway. A few commenters suggested that US 29 be dieted with more narrow lanes and more bicycle, transit, and pedestrian infrastructure instead.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Fairfax County Parkway Improvements	1	1	1	1	8	0	12

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

There was strong negative sentiment towards this project, with only 2 showing support. There is concern that this project will make Fairfax County Parkway more dangerous than it already is and that the improvements are only for automobile drivers. There was also concern about the cost of the project and skepticism towards VDOT's ability to maintain it in the future. A sporter noted the benefits that the smart lights will bring.

ROLLING ROAD WIDENING PROJECT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Rolling Road widening project	0	1	0	0	11	0	12

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received about the Rolling Road widening project expressed negative sentiment. Respondents cited concerns about induced demand and increased carbon emissions for all road widening projects. Some respondents suggested investments in safety and complete streets improvements as an alternative, noting that this area presents challenges for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

One comment expressed support for the project but wishes it included a bike lane, safe pedestrian walking paths, and pull outs for bus stops.

VA 7

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
VA 7	5		0	1	6	0	12

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received mixed sentiment, with 7 comments showing negative sentiment and 5 showing support. Those who do not support the project have concerns that widening VA 7 will induce more car demand and is skeptical about VDOT's ability to maintain it. Those who support the project anticipate congestion relief and support the inclusion of BRT.

RESTON PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Reston Parkway Improvements	0	0	0	4	7	0	11

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments express negative or strong negative sentiment towards the Reston Parkway Improvements project. Respondents criticized the road widening plans with concern that it would result in additional congestion. Many comments suggested that bike, pedestrian, and transit projects as alternatives. Some comments suggest that widening Reston Parkway would undermine the region's investment in the Silver Line.

VA 123 WIDENING (FAIRFAX)

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
VA 123 Widening (Fairfax)	0	0	0	1	10	0	11

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments for this project showed negative sentiment. There are concerns that VA 123 is already too wide and that more lanes will not solve the problem. A few commenters noted that the project description is not detailed enough on where the road will be widened.

US 1 BRT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
US 1 BRT	9	0	1	0	0	1	11

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received strong positive sentiment. There is enthusiasm for the potential to replace car trips with bus trips, while also making the corridor safer.

BATTLEFIELD PARK BYPASS PROJECT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Battlefield Park Bypass Project	0	0	0	0	10	0	10

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received express strong negative sentiment towards the Battlefield Park Bypass Project. Most comments call for the removal of this project over concern that it will encourage highspeed traffic through the area. Some respondents also criticize the project for undermining the Prince William County Strategic Plan's vision for walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly communities. One comment suggested the project undertake the Route 29 Alternate Alignment. There was also concern that the project will become a barrier for the community and encourage car-dependent development.

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW PROTECTED BICYCLE LANE

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Pennsylvania Avenue NW Protected Bicycle Lane	8	2	0	0	0	0	10

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments for this project show positive sentiment. There is enthusiasm for bicycle lanes that are designed with safety in mind. Others say that the project will also bring beautification improvements for the corridor. One commenter noted that Massachusetts Avenue may make more sense as a bicycle corridor.

DULLES TOLL ROAD EXPANSION

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Dulles Toll Road Expansion	0	0	0	1	8	0	9

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments express negative or strong negative sentiment about the Dulles Toll Road Expansion. Most respondents suggest that the road expansion project is outdated and will undermine the region's investment in the Silver Line and induce more automobile travel.

MAGARITY TOLL ROAD EXPANSION

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Magarity Toll Road Expansion	0	0	0	0	9	0	9

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments for this project showed strong negative sentiment. There is concern that many homes and a school will be negatively impacted by the project. There is emphasis that the project should instead focus on improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the metro.

MARC RUN-THROUGH SERVICE TO VIRGINIA

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
MARC Run-through service to Virginia	7	1	0	0	0	0	8

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received for the MARC Run-Through Service to Virginia expressed positive or strongly positive sentiment. Many comments mentioned the significance of the project to improving the regional rail network, especially facilitating travel to destinations outside of downtown Washington DC.

US 50 IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
US 50 Improvements	1	0	0	0	7	0	8

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

Most comments expressed strong negative sentiment towards the US 50 Improvements project. Many respondents opposing the project suggest supporting the STARS study recommendations for safety and operational improvements and considering a BRT study for the corridor.

One comment expressed support for the project but did not provide any additional information.

DULLES TOLL ROAD COLLECTOR

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Dulles Toll Road Collector	0	0	0	1	6	0	7

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

All comments received for the Dulles Toll Road Collector project report negative or strong negative sentiment towards the project. Most comments suggest that this project is outdated and undermines the region's investment in the Silver Line. One comment noted that the area should instead be designed as transit-oriented development.

NEW BRADDOCK RD

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
New Braddock Rd	0	0	1	0	4	0	5

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received strong negative sentiment, with only 1 neutral comment. There is concern that the project will create a barrier for the Center Ride Community and redirect traffic through a neighborhood and elementary school. There is also skepticism as to whether this project is needed at all. One neutral comment noted that there should be protected bicycle lanes, a road diet, crosswalks, and improved transit access.

NEW GUINEA ROAD, CONSTRUCT

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
New Guinea Road, Construct	0	0	0	0	5	0	5

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received strong negative sentiment. There is concern that this widening project will make the roadway less safe, contribute to emissions, worsen traffic, and destroy some natural areas. Some suggested that there should be a road diet with improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure instead.

STRINGFELLOW ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
Stringfellow Roadway Improvements	0	0	1	0	4	0	5

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received strong negative sentiment, with only 1 neutral comment. There is concern that the widening project will only induce automobile demand. Others noted that the project does not align with TPB's policy framework and question whether the current traffic levels warrant the roadway projects. There were suggestions that transit access be improved and a road diet be implemented.

VRE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS (REDUCE HEADWAYS)

Project	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
VRE Service Improvements (Reduce Headways)	4	0	1	0	0	0	5

Sentiment Analysis and Identified Themes:

This project received strong positive sentiment, with only 1 neutral comment. There is enthusiasm for making VRE more reliable and viable for users. There is also enthusiasm for the project's potential to get cars off the road.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROJECTS SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS AND NUMBER OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

Project Name	Number of Comments
Op Lanes Maryland Phase 1	182
Long Bridge VA - DC	45
I-270 Innovative Congestion Management	38
MARC Improvements	27
District-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Management Program	23
Union Station to Georgetown Streetcar Line	22
Duke Street BRT Design & Construction	17
Dulles Airport Access Road Project	16
MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit	16
DASH Service Expansion	15
Brunswick Line	14
Montrose Parkway	14
Veirs Mill Bus Rapid Transit	13
Alexandria 4th Track	13
Bus Rapid Transit: US 29 - Phase 2	13
US 29 Widening Project (ECL City of Fairfax (vic. Nutley St.) to Capital Beltway)	13
Fairfax County Parkway Improvements	12
Rolling Road widening Project	12
VA 7	12
Reston Parkway Improvements	11
VA 123 Widening (Fairfax)	11
US 1 BRT	10
Battlefield Park Bypass Project	10
Pennsylvania Avenue NW Protected Bicycle Lanes	10
Dulles Toll Road Expansion	9
Magarity Road Widening	9
MARC Run-through Service to Virginia	8
US 50 Improvements	8
Dulles Toll Road Collector	8
New Braddock Rd.	5
New Guinea Road, Construct	5
Stringfellow Roadway Improvements	5
VRE Service Improvements (Reduce Headways)	5

Response to Comments

TPB staff provided the project specific comments to the technical agencies responsible for project implementation

ATTACHMENT A: 2024 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FAQ RESPONSE

VISUALIZE 2050
National Capital Region Transportation Plan

Frequently Asked Questions
Received during the March 2024 Comment Period

Questions from TPB Board Members

1. **We would like to know how well our jurisdiction is doing over time. Is it possible for this round of analysis to assess whether a locality's policies, programs, and projects are impacting VMT, GHGs, and other metrics?**

    - Examining the effectiveness of the actions taken to address transportation system needs in relation to the goals is a very important element of decision making. The goals adopted by the TPB are regional in scale, as is its long-range transportation plan, which represents the collective action of the region to achieve its collective goals. The COG/TPB technical tools and methodology used to estimate changes in travel and system performance are regional in nature and are, thus, not best suited to assess smaller geographies (such as individual jurisdictions within the TPB planning area). Additionally, and importantly, there is a significant amount of inter-jurisdictional travel in the region, for both work and non-work purposes, that makes establishing a relationship between one jurisdiction's policies, programs, and projects to changes in travel and its impacts both challenging and somewhat subjective. There are opportunities, tools and approaches to assess impacts of specific policies, projects and programs at a local level through before-and-after studies that local transportation agencies are best suited to undertake.

2. **To understand what we as a region have accomplished over time, is it possible to do a comparison over a 10-to-15-year period?**

    - Yes. There are several measures that could be used to assess changes/progress over the past several years including travel patterns, travel experience and travel demand. Such data is collected as part of either program evaluation, e.g., Commuter Connections, or a regional program, such as the Congestion Management Process (CMP). It is important to note that travel patterns and demand are affected not just by changes in the transportation system and services, but also often by changes in socio-economic aspects of the region. Data on such changes, including population, employment, land use, and the economy are tracked, yet at different levels and frequencies. The TPB's CMP explains how congestion in the region has changed with regard to freight, highway, transit, managed lanes, and airport access. The most recent CMP report is available here. Staff will examine what additional types of data can be compiled.

3. **Regarding the Project Summary Table, what was the process that staff conducted to determine whether a project aligns with the TPB goals? There appears to be some inconsistencies across the projects.**

    - The transportation agencies were asked to provide information on a menu of topics for each project including the project's support of various TPB goals. TPB staff held training for staff from implementing agencies (state and local government) on how to respond to the project input questions. TPB staff reviewed the information provided by the agencies for each project in conducting a qualitative assessment of the assertions made with respect to the TPB goals. TPB staff also associated the TPB goals with the federal planning factors that are to guide an MPO's transportation plan. It is likely that this information was missing for some of the

projects OR was incomplete. TPB staff will continue to work with implementing agencies to make any corrections or edits as needed.

4. **Do projects only need to comply with one of the ten federal planning factors?**

   - Yes, projects only need to comply with one factor.

5. **Could you please clarify the Maryland Op Lane projects proposed for inclusion?**

   - Detailed information about the proposal for express lanes in Maryland as part of Visualize 2050 is available in a separate FAQ handout.

6. **Regarding the 2021 Resolution and zero-based budgeting directive, how can we as an MPO and as local agencies meet the directive to provide multiple build scenarios for project proposals?**

   - TPB staff, over the years, have conducted large-scale scenario analyses. For instance, if the region does not build highway projects but instead builds transit projects, or if the region does not invest further into the transit system. Some of these scenarios were for a target year of 2040 and some were for 2045. These scenarios were summarized (see Summary of Findings and Detailed Findings) at the beginning of the Visualize 2050 development process to inform the jurisdictions and help guide their decisions on the types of projects to submit for Visualize 2050.

7. **The region has set GHG goals, what environmental goals and standards are applicable to this process? Are we just meeting the federal minimum standards or are we going beyond the minimum?**

   - The TPB's first priority is to make sure ozone-forming pollutants will be below a certain level that is acceptable to the EPA, which is the focus of the air quality conformity analysis to be undertaken over the next ten months. Secondly, while not yet prescribed by the feds, the TPB has set the goal for the region to reduce on-road GHG emissions 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. As such the TPB's process goes beyond meeting the federal standards. The Climate Change Mitigation Study identified several strategies that would reduce GHG and also contribute to reducing ozone forming pollutants. Some of these strategies are aimed at reducing travel or changing the mode of travel, and others are aimed at changing the fuel used to travel. The TPB is pursuing strategies across all these pathways. The TPB study found that transitioning vehicle fleets to cleaner fuels would be the most effective strategy in meeting these GHG reduction goals, though achieving this transition is going to take time and will require efforts beyond the TPB's purview.

8. **Is there a set goal for VMT reduction per capita?**

   - No, there is no numeric goal for per capita VMT reduction, rather a more general goal to see VMT reduction per capita throughout the region over time. This itself is challenging in a region that continues to grow, adding more households every year, and each household typically results in about 8-10 trips/day.

9. **Why is a portion of the Falls Church/Fairfax County Route 7 BRT project not included in Visualize 2050?**

   - This Route 7 project is listed in the Transportation Improvement Program for planning and engineering and is documented as an ongoing study. It is not included in the project list for air quality analysis because there is no reasonable anticipated funding available for construction at this time. The project can be added once funding has been secured or found to be reasonably available at which time the plan can be amended for its inclusion.

Questions from the Public

About PROJECTS:

10. **What express lanes are proposed in Maryland?**

    - Please see this FAQ on the proposed Maryland express lanes. Note, the section of I-270 north of I-370 to I-70 is currently included as a study, not coded.

11. **Why are there few or no projects in my locality?**

    - Each locality/state/transit agency submitted only capacity-related projects that have significance when measuring future air quality. This does not reflect the full spectrum of transportation projects planned within a locality or in the region. If few or no projects are listed within a locality that means no capacity-related projects have been proposed at this time.

About CLIMATE CHANGE:

12. **What policies does the TPB have regarding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?**

    - Greenhouse gases are not a criteria pollutant, and therefore are not covered by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), so they are not required as part of the air quality conformity analysis. Despite the absence of a federal mandate to estimate GHGs for the region's transportation plan, the TPB has estimated GHG emissions caused by on-road transportation since 2010 and has provided this information as part of the plan's performance analysis. See, for example, Chapter 8, p. 225, Figure 8.27 of Visualize 2045. See also the discussions of GHGs on pp. 129-134 (Chapter 6).[1]

      The TPB endorsed COG's economy-wide GHG reduction goals. In June 2022, the TPB adopted the same goals specifically for the on-road sector, making the TPB the first MPO to voluntarily adopt GHG reduction goals specific to the on-road transportation sector. The goals are 1) 50% below 2005 levels by 2030; and 2) 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. 2) These are very ambitious goals that will be very challenging to meet. TPB has conducted multiple scenario

[1] "2022 Update to Visualize 2045, a Long-Range Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region," June 15, 2022.

studies aimed at finding viable solutions for attaining these GHG reduction goals. GHG reduction goals and strategies that were adopted by the TPB are part of the TPB's Synthesized Policy Framework.

About EQUITY:

13. How is equity considered in these projects?

- Agencies had the option to explain how the project supports or advances equity, but some agencies may have omitted this information. The TPB will conduct an Environmental Justice analysis on the regional impact of all the projects following the plan's approval. Separately, as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), implementing agencies that have individual projects financed entirely or in part by federal agencies are required to analyze environmental effects of the project which includes considerations of Environmental Justice populations.

About the MODEL:

14. What pollutants does the TPB model include in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis?

- The TPB's air quality conformity analysis is only for ground-level ozone, which is one of the six criteria pollutants with a national standard established by the EPA. Ground-level ozone is produced when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) mix with sunlight. The air quality conformity process refers to a very specific set of tasks that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and states are required to conduct to be able to obtain federal funding for the projects in the region. "Conformity" is a requirement of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) to ensure that 1) transportation plans and transportation improvement programs are consistent with air quality goals, and 2) progress toward achieving and maintaining federal air quality standards is being made. Using a set of required tools, including EPA's mobile emissions estimation model, MOVES, and the region's travel demand forecasting model, a conformity analysis is undertaken to forecast VOCs and NOx emissions from the vehicles on the region's planned transportation system. The analysis must demonstrate that those emissions are within limits outlined in state air quality implementation plans (SIPs) and approved by the EPA.

15. How are transit, bike, and pedestrian modes considered in the model?

- The COG/TPB Gen2/Ver. 2.4 Travel Model is an advanced, trip-based, "four-step" model, which accounts for traffic congestion and ensures that congested speeds are used consistently throughout the model as appropriate. The travel model, which is consistent with best practices for regional travel models, represents vehicular travel that produces emissions and includes, automobiles, trucks, and transit vehicles. Biking and walking trips are neither explicitly represented nor included in emissions estimation, yet they are included in

calculating the total number of trips generated in the region and as a mode to travel to access transit. More information can be found in TPB's travel model documentation.[2]

16. How are traffic jams and traffic lights considered in the model?

- The air quality conformity analysis makes use of the regional travel demand forecasting model (the Gen2/Ver. 2.4 Travel Model) and the EPA's mobile emissions model (MOVES). The regional travel model is an advanced, trip-based, "four-step" model, which accounts for traffic congestion, and thus includes the effects of traffic jams. The travel model is consistent with best practices for regional travel models and ensures that congested speeds are used consistently throughout the model. However, static traffic assignment models are macroscopic models that do not have the resolution to represent traffic lights. By contrast, sub-regional analyses conducted by some state and/or local governments may include mesoscopic and/or microscopic traffic assignment models that do represent traffic lights, but this type of traffic assignment model is not commonly found in regional travel models.

17. What type of VMT will be analyzed and with what methodology?

- The regional travel demand forecasting model (the Gen2/Ver. 2.4 Travel Model) is used to estimate VMT for various forecast years and all types of motor vehicles. Additionally, the modeling is performed for a typical weekday and includes both work and non-work related trips. As such, VMT can be summarized by trip purpose (e.g., work vs. non-work). The Gen2/Ver. 2.4 Travel Model is an advanced, trip-based, "four-step" model, which accounts for traffic congestion using a static traffic assignment within a speed-feedback loop, which ensures that the VMT reflects congested speeds, when applicable. The travel model is consistent with best practices for regional travel models.

18. How does the travel model account for induced demand and its effect on land use changes?

- TPB's air quality conformity analysis makes use of the regional travel demand forecasting model (the Gen2/Ver. 2.4 Travel Model) and the EPA's mobile emissions model (MOVES). The regional travel model is an advanced, trip-based model and is consistent with best practices for regional travel models. Use of the MOVES mobile emissions model is mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

  The current travel model is state of the practice in terms of capturing induced demand primarily through speed feedback loops and, like most four-step travel models, it can capture induced demand arising from most of the immediate and some near-term/long-term travel behavioral interactions.

19. Are current telework practices reflected in the model, and can you explain how these assumptions will be different for Visualize 2050?

- COG/TPB's current production-use travel demand forecasting model (the Gen2/Ver. 2.4.6 Model) was estimated and calibrated using empirical data (primarily household travel

[2] Meseret Seifu et al., "User's Guide for the COG/TPB Gen2/Version 2.4.6 Travel Demand Forecasting Model" (Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, July 11, 2023), https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/data-and-tools/modeling/model-documentation/.

surveys and transit on-board surveys) which occurred prior to the Covid pandemic, and, thus, was not calibrated to reflect pandemic effects on travel behavior. The air quality conformity analysis and performance analysis of Visualize 2050, will be conducted using the current, production-use travel model (and latest EPA mobile emissions model, MOVES4), without incorporating revised, post-pandemic telecommuting and/or travel pattern assumptions, since we currently do not have sufficient empirical data to re-estimate and re-calibrate the regional travel demand model. Nonetheless, COG is in the process of collecting such data for future model development work. It should be noted that the current model, which assumes pre-Covid telecommuting rates, will tend to overestimate VMT and emissions, and will, thus, provide a conservative estimate of mobile emissions (i.e., it will tend to overestimate mobile emissions).

20. Can the model account for policy scenarios such as EV incentives or higher gas taxes?

- The COG/TPB travel demand forecasting model can estimate the effect of gas taxes on travel, but it is not designed to be used to model vehicle purchasing behavior. Nonetheless, the EPA's MOVES emissions model requires inputs about the percentage of the vehicle fleet by fuel type (including EVs), so it is possible to test changes in the vehicle fleet. The TPB has used its regional travel demand model in many of its past scenario studies.

  It is important to note that while the TPB acknowledges the importance of assessing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, equity, congestion, EV incentives, user fees, and other elements as possible future scenarios, such a scenario analysis is not part of the transportation conformity analysis performed for Visualize 2050.

  To elaborate, the air quality conformity process refers to a very specific set of tasks that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and states are required to conduct on its transportation plan and transportation improvement program (TIP) if the MPO is in non-attainment of federal standards for air quality. Both the Plan and the TIP have specific federal requirements to adhere to including that the projects, programs and policies in these should be based on funding that is reasonably expected to be available and should be based on the latest set of officially adopted planning assumptions. In essence, the Plan and TIP cannot be a "what if" analysis as examined in a scenario analysis.

About ROADWAYS:

21. How do express lanes help improve air quality or help achieve climate goals?

- The TPB has many goals which the transportation projects aim to achieve, such as providing affordable and convenient multimodal options, promoting livable and prosperous communities, increasing transportation-related safety, and enhancing environmental protection (which includes air quality). Visit the plan webpage for more information about priority strategies designed to achieve one or more of the TPB's goals. It is not expected that every proposed transportation project or policy will make progress on every goal.

Regarding the ability of express lanes/high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes to help air quality, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) noted, "Like their HOV counterparts, HOT lanes have the potential to help improve air quality where they are implemented. High-occupancy lanes might help to reduce harmful impacts to the environment associated with congestion, especially by encouraging the use of multi-passenger vehicles or mass transit systems."[3]

22. How do express lanes help improve congestion?

- Express lanes have the potential to reduce congestion in several ways depending upon, among other things, their location and operational environment. If express lanes are located parallel to regular lanes that are congested, then by shifting vehicles to the express lanes congestion on the regular lanes could be reduced. Express lanes that generate revenues could be used to provide a new transit service which reduces the number of vehicles and thus congestion. Express lanes designed to allow vehicles with more than a certain number of people to travel for free will promote the formation of carpools and vanpools which reduce the number of vehicles and thus reduce congestion. Overall Express lanes have the potential to provide new more reliable travel options and reduce congestion.

23. Why are there so many roadway widening projects?

- The TPB's planning area covers a large area – about 3,800 square miles and includes a large roadway network with more than 17,000 lane miles of different functional classes (Interstates, HOT lanes, parkways, major and minor arterials, local roads, etc.) The roadway network serves thousands of communities – residential, commercial, mixed use, which generate large number of vehicular trips – about 12M (including transit trips) for work and non-work purposes and logs about 120M vehicle miles in a typical day. Several operating conditions at the community/local levels related to safety, congestion, and access merit attention and widening a segment of a roadway are at times what the local transportation agency determines to be the best solution.

24. What are the meaningful alternatives, with comparative scenarios, to the roadway expansions/extensions?

- Both COG and TPB have conducted a myriad of scenario studies to estimate the effects of different futures and assumptions on the region. The following studies provide additional details:
    - "What Would It Take? Transportation and Climate Change in the National Capital Region." Final Report. Washington, D.C.: National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, May 18, 2010. http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/pub-documents/qF5eXVw20110617114503.pdf.
    - "CLRP Aspirations Scenario, TPB Scenario Study." Final Report. Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, September 8, 2010. http://www.mwcog.org/store/item.asp?PUBLICATION_ID=409.

[3] "Page 1, HOT Lanes, Cool Facts," Pamphlet (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, April 2012).

- "An Assessment of Regional Initiatives for the National Capital Region: Executive Summary, Technical Report on Phase II of the TPB Long-Range Plan Task Force." Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, December 2017. https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2017/12/20/long-range-plan-task-force-reports-projects-regional-transportation-priorities-plan-scenario-planning-tpb/.
- "An Assessment of Regional Initiatives for the National Capital Region: Technical Report on Phase II of the TPB Long-Range Plan Task Force." Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, December 20, 2017. https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2017/12/20/long-range-plan-task-force-reports-projects-regional-transportation-priorities-plan-scenario-planning-tpb/.
- "TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021: Scenario Analysis Findings." Final Report. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, January 7, 2022. https://www.mwcog.org/tpb-climate-change-mitigation-study-of-2021/.
- "TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021: Additional Transportation Scenarios Analysis: TPB Survey Identified Scenarios." Final Report. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, June 3, 2022. https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/5/18/tpb-climate-work-session/.
- "A Summary of the TPB and COG Scenario Study Findings: Informing Planning for the Metropolitan Washington Region." Draft Report. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, November 3, 2022. https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/11/4/tpb-technical-committee/.
- "Appendix A: Detailed Findings, Scenario Study Findings, Informing Planning for the Metropolitan Washington Region." Draft Report. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, November 3, 2022. https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/11/4/tpb-technical-committee/.

25. For the road extensions that connect to other major arteries, is there adequate exploration of the mileage possibly saved or environmental degradation incurred?

- As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), implementing agencies that have individual projects financed entirely or in-part by federal agencies are required to analyze the impacts of the project both on travel and the environment which includes considerations of potential impacts to the social and natural environment.

26. How can you claim these projects enhance access, transit, or reduce greenhouse gases?

- The TPB has many different goals, including improving reliability and efficient system operations, providing affordable and convenient multimodal options, and improving air quality (for both criteria pollutants and GHG emissions). Some proposed projects may help attain some goals but may not be helpful with other goals.

27. What are the benefits of allowing trucks in express lanes?

- Trucks are a necessary part of the transportation system, moving cargo and supplies used by everyone (e.g., groceries, appliances, and factory equipment). Most people prefer to limit the amount of truck traffic on local roads even though such traffic cannot be eliminated on local roads. If trucks are allowed in express lanes, that will reduce truck traffic on parallel roads, such as minor and major arterials. Trucks must pay a toll to use the express lanes providing additional revenue for other transportation improvements including transit.

About TRANSIT:

28. Why aren't there more transit projects being done sooner?

- Projects are at varying stages of development with transit projects usually taking longer and being more expensive to implement. Available funding also limits the number and types of projects that can be developed. Also, the projects presented for this comment period are only those that impact system capacity so many other types of transit projects agencies are working on are not reflected here, like bus replacements, bus stop improvements, and other transit enhancements.

About BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS:

29. How are pedestrians and bicyclists included in these projects?

- Please review the detailed project description sheets available via the Project Summary Table which explain the non-motorized accommodations planned for each project.

30. Why are trails projects not included?

- Trails are not part of the air quality modelling analysis. Only vehicle or transit capacity impacting projects are included in this comment period because of their potential to impact future attainment of air quality goals and thus must go through a multi-month modeling analysis to make this determination. Trail planning and construction continues to be active in the region, and trails will be reflected in the final plan's project list.

ATTACHMENT B: 2024 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD LETTERS RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
Commissioner

1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Christina Henderson, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4201

RE: TPB Virginia Member Agencies Responses to Comments Received from March 2024 Public Comment Period

Dear Chair Henderson:

As requested, provided are responses by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties, to public comments received on the air quality conformity (AQC) inputs to Visualize2050, during the TPB formal one-month public comment period that occurred in March 2024.

It is worth emphasizing that the Commonwealth, VDOT and our regional partners took the plan update process seriously; consideration to the zero-base budget and all TPB's goals and priorities (safety, maintenance, reliability, environmental protection, etc.) was paramount for this update. The member jurisdictions reviewed their priorities and goals for alignment with TPB's goals and priorities. This in some cases has resulted in the removal or modification of projects in the plan (including roadway widening projects) as well as looking for opportunities for more multimodal projects, and a balance approach for investment in all modes of transportation.

We believe that the proposed projects in the plan are designed to provide our customers with excellent travel options, maintain a reasonable level of service for all modes, and offer a high degree of travel time reliability. This allows residents and businesses to plan their activities efficiently and make the most of their time.

VDOT RESPONSE

I-95 Bi-Directional Express Lanes

- The current I-95 Express Lanes system is reversible and switches directions according to the peak commute direction. Adding express lanes capacity in the counter-peak direction on the I-95 Express Lanes would enable efficient travel in both directions.
- It would also provide more travelers seamless connectivity to Northern Virginia's more than 90-mile express lanes network.
- This project provides new travel choices for even more express lanes users who want a faster and more reliable trip – including drivers who choose to pay a toll, and carpoolers (HOV-3+) and bus riders who travel toll-free, which is consistent with other Northern Virginia Express Lanes.
- An environmental study is underway.
- This project improves travel time and travel flow for vehicles mainly in general purpose lanes, which helps lessens environmental impacts associated with emissions, and provides a missing reliable travel option in the off-peak direction.

- The project supports the following federal planning factors:
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of people.
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of freight.
    - Promote efficient system management and operation.
    - Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area especially by enabling global competitiveness productivity and efficiency.
    - Protect and enhance the environment promote energy conservation improve the quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

I-95 Express Lane Access for Trucks and I-495 Express Lane Access for Trucks

- These projects do not involve road widening, however, does changes classifications of vehicles allowed in both the I-95 and I-495 Express Lanes in Virginia.
- Along I-95, transit payments in project agreements allow toll revenues to fund transit and multimodal improvements.
- The travel options benefit a variety of users, not just with one or two passengers in a vehicle choosing to pay a toll. Managed lanes promote carpooling with HOV 3+ for free as well as transit usage, with buses traveling for free with faster and more reliable service.
- The project allows for a faster and better travel time reliability for freight movement, which helps lessens environmental impacts associated with emissions, and could provide an economic benefit to the region by allowing freight companies to improve efficiencies. Dynamic tolls fluctuate based on traffic volumes and speed will manage demand for the lanes. Additionally, toll prices will be set based on classification of vehicle.
- This project redistributes truck traffic between right-most lanes of I-95 and I-495 general purpose lanes and the express lanes but does not induce new truck demand along the corridor.
- Posted speed limits would not be changed.
- The funding source to be determined once a preferred alternative is approved, and study becomes a project.
- The project supports the following federal planning factors:
    - Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area especially by enabling global competitiveness productivity and efficiency
    - Protect and enhance the environment promote energy conservation improve the quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of freight

I-495 Southside Express Lanes (SEL)

- VDOT recognize that travelers on this section of I-495 are facing increasing congestion and challenges now. We also realize that rail would be a very costly and long-term option that may not be feasible for decades to come. So, we are focused on solutions that could be implemented in the nearer term, cost effectively and largely within the footprint of the existing corridor.
- The I-495 SEL project would provide an Express Lanes connection on the eastern end of the interstate that currently does not have Express Lanes, beginning east of the Springfield Interchange.
- The ongoing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis considers a two-lane Express Lane system that could extend across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to the MD 210 Interchange.
- The project would accommodate bus transit enhancements. Alternatives under NEPA review do not preclude rail on the bridge by either retaining existing, unoccupied space or by incorporating

a requirement to convert necessary space to rail transit in the future when a rail expansion is funded for implementation.

- The project would provide additional travel choices, including carpooling (HOV 3+) and opportunities for more reliable trips on transit. New ramp connections to the Express Lanes would be provided at Van Dorn Street Interchange and at US Route 1 in Virginia, and at I-295 and MD-210 in Maryland.
- Funding source to be determined once a preferred alternative is approved, and study becomes a project.
- This project is identified as one of TPB's aspirational initiatives "Expand the Express Highway Network" and supports the following federal planning factors:
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of people
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of freight
    - Promote efficient system management and operation
    - Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area especially by enabling global competitiveness productivity and efficiency

I-495 Express Toll Lanes Northern Extension (NEXT)

- I-495 NEXT is in its third year of construction, with the new 2.5 miles of express lanes on track to open in December 2025. Final project completion is scheduled for May 2026.
- NEPA requirements met by project, Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
- This is an independent project that will provide time savings for express lanes users and reduce cut-through traffic on local roads.
- The project is providing new infrastructure by replacing bridges across the Beltway, as well as safety and operational improvements including direct access ramps to express lanes at the Dulles Toll Road and George Washington Memorial Parkway interchanges, and new roadway features like acceleration/deceleration lanes and auxiliary lanes.
- In addition, multi-modal improvements are part of the project – a new bus route between Tysons and Bethesda is planned to begin this summer. This new bus service is paid for by the Commonwealth and our I-495 Express Lanes project partner. Bus riders and vehicles with three or more people will be able to experience faster and more reliable on the new express lanes toll-free. It also includes a number of bike and pedestrian improvements. These include sidewalk and share use path upgrades and additions. Also, a park annex to facilitate parking for bicyclists wishing to use the shared use path at the Georgetown Pike and Balls Hills Road intersection is being built with the project.
- A new commuter bus service between Tysons and Bethesda is launching this summer paid for with Commonwealth and concessionaire funding as part of the I-495 NEXT project.
- This project provides new travel choices for even more express lanes users who want a faster and more reliable trip – including drivers who choose to pay a toll, and carpoolers (HOV-3+) and bus riders who travel toll-free, which is consistent with other Northern Virginia Express Lanes
- Funding source to be determined once a preferred alternative is approved, and study becomes a project.
- This project is identified as one of TPB's aspirational initiatives "Expand the Express Highway Network" and supports the following federal planning factors:
    - Emphasize that preservation of the existing transportation system
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of people
    - Promote efficient system management and operation

I-66 Multimodal Improvements (Inside the Beltway)

- The construction portion of this project has been completed.
- The project includes 22.5 miles of new Express Lanes along side of three general purpose lanes; enhancements to interchanges, additional auxiliary lanes, new park and ride lots, new and expanded bus service and transit routes, and 11 miles of new bike and pedestrian trails.
- Revenues collected from tolls are used to fund transit and other multimodal projects.
    - Through the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), Commuter Choice Program, the revenue collected from tolls along I-66 are reinvested to fund transit and multimodal projects. To date, $66.2M of toll revenue has been reinvested to fund 41 transit/multimodal projects along the I-66 corridor, one of the proven benefits of the I-66 project.

I-495 Auxiliary Lanes

- The primary goal of the auxiliary lanes is to improve safety and reduce instances of high-speed differences between the regular lanes due to weaving of entering and exiting traffic.
- This project is not conducive to addressing access for pedestrians or bicyclists, as it is related to safety and operations between adjacent interchanges.
- The project not only improves network connectivity, but helps environmental impacts associated with emissions.
- The project supports the following federal planning factors:
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of people.
    - Increase accessibility and mobility of freight.
    - Promote efficient system management and operation.

FAIRFAX COUNTY RESPONSE

The following are some overarching comments on how some of the data is displayed in TPB public comment summary document.

- Showing the project types in separate maps as depicted by way of MetroQuest (page 7) and calculating participant support (beginning on page 148) misses the fact that most of these projects were conceived to work synergistically within the transportation network and surrounding land uses.
    - For example, Fairfax County is widening US1 and constructing a 7-mile Bus Rapid Transit system in that corridor. There are multiple bicycle and pedestrian projects throughout the US1 corridor that will complement the roadway widening and BRT components. Participant support for the BRT component is 95.7%. However, participant support for the widening complementing the BRT is 10.3%.
    - Another example project is the widening of Frying Pan Road. Participant support for this project is 11.5%. As shown in this manner, the project appears to be a stand-alone widening project. However, there is tremendous growth in the area in general, and multiple land-use developments are happening on both sides of this roadway.
    - All Fairfax County roadway projects include bicycle and pedestrian components. That said, the percentages of participant support statistics display a sort of incongruency in how the information is being communicated (displayed) and how it's being received (interpreted or understood).

LOUDOUN COUNTY RESPONSE

EQUITY: Transportation Equity assures communities have accessible and affordable transportation for everyone in the community resulting in fair distribution of transportation resources, benefits, costs, programs, and services based upon differences in income, ability and other factor affecting transportation choice and impact.
All projects in Loudoun County, are guided by the 2019 Comprehensive Plan (Plan) and is driven by the following vision and goals:

1. Enhanced multimodal safety for all system users.
2. A reliable and efficient multimodal transportation network.
3. Transportation choices that connect people to their communities, employment centers, educational institutions, activity centers, and other amenities.
4. Integration with neighboring jurisdictions to improve regional and statewide connectivity and to attract residents and businesses to Loudoun County.
5. Context-sensitive planning and design that addresses the different characteristics and needs of the Urban, Suburban, Transition, Towns, and Rural Policy Areas; Towns; and Joint Land Management Areas (JLMA).
6. A transportation network supportive of the County's overall vision to support economic development, create vibrant, safe communities and public spaces, and protect natural and heritage resources.

TPB ASPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES: Loudoun County aspires to be a place where pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities have a safe, secure, and convenient transportation network of walkways and bikeways that enable efficient movement to and from home, work, school, shopping, libraries, parks, and community centers. This project follows the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Policies that prioritize construction of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and connections associated with construction and improvements to arterial and collector roadways with emphasis on the completion of connections between existing facilities in an effort to provide regional connections, and to the provision of safe walking and bicycling routes to new and existing public schools.

Route 15 North Widening
The results of the Route 15 North Congestion Report, initiated to reduce traffic congestion between Battlefield Parkway and Whites Ferry Road, were presented to the Board of Supervisors in May 2017. Recommendations from the report included widening US Route 15 from two to four lanes between Battlefield Parkway and Montresor Road. As a result of the report, the board directed the initiation of the Route 15 North Safety and Operations Study to identify potential improvements between Whites Ferry Road and the Maryland state line. The adopted Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) was amended in 2018 to widen US Route 15 from two to four lanes between Battlefield Parkway and Montresor Road. The project scope includes: a signalized Continuous Green "T" (CGT intersection) at North King Street to allow through traffic to continue north on US Route 15 without stopping, an updated signalized intersection at Whites Ferry Road, and a two-lane hybrid roundabout at Montresor Road at a realigned section of Limestone School Road opposite Montresor Road. The project also includes a shared use path / regional trail along the west side of US Route 15 from Tuscarora High School to Montresor Road, and a shared use path/ regional trail along the entire length of Whites Ferry Road. As called for by the CTP, the design process includes context-sensitive methods for transportation projects in the Rural Policy Area and follows the guidelines for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY RESPONSE

The following are responses for five new roadway projects proposed to be added to Visualize2050 Plan.

- Two of the projects, the Route 29 Alternative and Pageland Lane, provide less impactful alternatives to the Manassas Battlefield Bypass project, while achieving the goal of the National Park Service to close the park to through traffic and improving local and regional mobility.
- The Residency Road Bridge project proposes to construct a bridge over railroad tracks to provide a direct vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Innovation Activity Center and the Broad Run VRE Station. This project will be critical to supporting the local and regional goal of directing 75 percent of population, employment, and housing growth to activity centers.
- The US 28 Bull Run Bridge Study is a study to identify and evaluate alternatives for improving the existing Bull Run Bridge, which connects Prince William and Fairfax County. The Route 28 corridor is targeted for Bus Rapid Transit and widening of the bridge is anticipated to support these transit plans.
- The final road project is the Graham Park Road Diet. This is a project to remove vehicle lanes in an Equity Emphasis Area and convert to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This is the County's first road diet project and was developed with technical assistance from the TPB Regional Roadway Safety Program.

Thank you for providing the TPB Virginia member agencies an opportunity to offer responses to public comments. Representatives from VDOT and Virginia localities will be available to follow-up as needed with any additional information.

Sincerely,

for Bill Cuttler, P.E.
Northern Virginia District Engineer

Cc: Ms. Maria Sinner, P.E., VDOT-NoVA
Mr. Amir Shahpar, P.E., VDOT-NoVA
Malcolm Watson, Fairfax County
Rob Donaldson, Loudoun County
Meagan Landis, Prince William County