



## PlanWorks Case Study

# Development of Aspirational Regional Initiatives National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board



*This case study is an excellent example of engaging a diverse group of stakeholders in collaborative planning to inform the long-range transportation plan. Although the National Capital Region did not use PlanWorks, the PlanWorks Stakeholder Collaboration and Visioning Applications will be very useful in helping other agencies collaborating for a similar purpose.*

### Executive Summary

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the metropolitan planning organization for the Washington, DC region. Housed within and staffed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), the TPB is responsible for coordinating transportation planning for Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Following the adoption of the region's long-range transportation plan (LRTP) in 2016, the TPB members were unsatisfied with the long-term performance of the region's transportation system, particularly in relation to regional congestion. As a result, the TPB undertook a concerted effort to explore ways to substantially improve the region's future transportation system performance by enhancing the current mix of projects, programs and policies in the 2040 LRTP and setting a foundation for a new way of developing the next and subsequent LRTPs.

The TPB established a Long-Range Plan Task Force in 2017 to explore regional strategies that could improve system performance and support development of the next long-range plan update. The 18-member Task Force was comprised of local officials and State-level department of transportation officials representing Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia; a representative of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); and representatives of the citizen advisory committee and the traditionally underserved population groups.

As a first step, the Task Force compiled over 80 different projects, programs and policy ideas that had not been included in the current plan. From this larger set of strategies, the Task Force refined and selected 10 improvement initiatives for further analysis. Each of these ten initiatives represented a comprehensive bundle of project, program and policy

### Overview

The Long-Range Plan Task Force effort undertaken by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board helped to support a new way of planning for the future of transportation in the Greater Washington, DC metro area. The approach included:

- A collaborative effort of representatives of each of the three major jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia) to look at solutions from a regional perspective.
- A clear articulation of the regional challenges and an analysis approach to compare alternatives in relation to their ability to address those challenges.
- Creation of ground rules and mechanisms to help move toward consensus on regional priority initiatives.
- Use of a multi-criterion quantitative and qualitative evaluation process to assess and compare alternatives, with ultimate flexibility of members of the Task Force to select priorities.

ideas intended to realize the full potential of the improvement. The goal of analyzing these ten initiatives was to discover whether any of them could make significant progress towards achieving the region's transportation performance goals. Based on the results of the analysis, the Task Force agreed upon five of the 10 initiatives to recommend as part of the aspirational component of the 2045 LRTP. In December 2017, the TPB endorsed these five initiatives and called on its member jurisdictions and agencies to fully explore specific implementation actions, both individually and collectively, that could be taken to make them part of the region's next LRTP. The TPB subsequently added two additional initiatives in January 2018 based on findings and recommendations from a concurrent analysis of non-motorized projects of regional significance conducted by TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee. All seven of these aspirational initiatives were integrated into the next LRTP, called Visualize 2045, which was formally adopted by the TPB in October 2018.

This effort involved a shift from simply compiling the priorities of Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and WMATA in the plan toward a more consensus and analysis-based approach to identify regional priority strategies with a focus on improving regional transportation performance. This case study highlights the events leading to the establishment of the Long-Range Plan Task Force, the collaborative process that was used by the Task Force, and the integration of the results of this effort into the Washington, DC region's 2045 LRTP.

### Agency Challenges

The National Capital Area is a growing region of 5.7 million people and 3.3 million jobs, encompassing Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The region is consistently ranked as having some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation and expected population growth is anticipated to exacerbate these challenges. Between 2016 and 2040, the region is projected to have a 23 percent increase in population (1.2 million added people) and a 29 percent increase in employment (940,000 added jobs).

The Transportation Planning Board's (TPB's) Vision document outlines a set of policy goals, objectives and

### Decision Guide Connections

The Long-Range Plan Task Force did not use PlanWorks, however, the broad planning framework developed by the Task Force illustrates the following key decision points:

- LRP-1 (Approve Scope of LRTP Process). The TPB decided to extend the scope of the LRTP process to go beyond the fiscally constrained to include aspirational initiatives.
- LRP-2 (Approve Vision and Goals). The Task Force built upon the region's vision document and policy guide to clarify regional challenges and identify priorities.
- LRP-3 (Approve Evaluation Criteria, Methods, and Measures). The Task Force selected a set of measures of effectiveness for evaluation as well as qualitative evaluation factors.
- LRP-4 (Approve Transportation Deficiencies). The Task Force clarified regional challenges that would be important to address.
- LRP-6 (Approve Strategies). The Task Force identified a range of possible strategies (initiatives) for evaluation and recommended ten for further study.
- LRP-8 (Adopt Preferred Plan Scenario). The Task Force recommended five initiatives, and the TPB expanded this list to seven aspirational initiatives for the region for concerted regional action.
- LRP-10 (Adopt LRP by MPO). The TPB approved the LRP, called Visualize 2045, including the priority initiatives recommended by the Task Force as part of a new chapter of the LRP focused on aspirational elements.

strategies aimed to guide the region's transportation system investments and development. Based on these goals, the TPB approved a policy guide known as the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan in January 2014 to identify current priorities and call upon the region to implement strategies to improve mobility and accessibility.

Over many cycles of planning, the TPB's approach to its long-range plan had been to develop a fiscally constrained plan. Referred to as the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP), the document identifies individual projects and priorities only up to the level of funding reasonably expected to be available over the time frame of the plan. While the CLRP's development has been guided by policy principles and objectives established by the TPB and supportive of regional goals adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG), the individual projects and priorities in the plan largely were identified by individual jurisdictions and agencies with limited regional direction from the TPB.

Following adoption of the 2040 CLRP in 2014, subsequently amended in 2016, the TPB members acknowledged the progress of the plan, but also identified significant shortfalls in meeting regional goals. On the positive side, the mode share of transit and non-motorized travel were forecast to increase, and mobile-source emissions of criteria pollutants would decline. However, TPB members expressed considerable concern that even with all the investments in the plan, regional roadway congestion (expressed in vehicle hours of delay) was projected to increase by 74 percent between 2016 and 2040. Given the significant traffic congestion already facing commuters in the region, this level of performance was viewed by members of the TPB as unacceptable. In addition to increased roadway congestion, transit crowding was anticipated to increase, driven in part by projected household and job growth. TPB members also expressed concern about insufficient growth in transit mode share, continued disparity in accessibility between the eastern and western part of the region, and insufficient progress toward meeting greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The TPB recognized that the current level of capital funding over the planning horizon would be insufficient to adequately address existing mobility needs while meeting the anticipated growth in travel demand. Despite planned transportation investments of approximately \$250 billion through 2040 in the CLRP, most of the funding (83 percent) would be dedicated to system maintenance and operations, with only 17% available for capacity enhancement.

Many board members began thinking beyond the financial restrictions of the existing CLRP with the idea to explore new and creative options to improve the performance of the region's future transportation system. The TPB was interested in not only advocating for additional investments but to consider policy initiatives that would both better manage travel demand and affect people's travel choices.

The TPB passed multiple resolutions and convened two working groups from 2014 to 2018 to address the issues they identified. The Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group convened from 2014 to 2016 and the Long-Range Plan Task Force was then established and convened through 2017.

### **Multi-Stage Effort to Develop Aspirational Initiatives**

The TPB created a three-phase work plan to be implemented over the 2014 to 2018 period. The work plan used a consensus-based approach to develop new strategies for the next LRTP. This process is described in the following sections.

#### **Phase I: Unfunded Projects Analysis**

In September 2014, the TPB asked staff to compile an unfunded capital needs inventory that would encompass transportation projects included in the plans of TPB member jurisdictions and transportation agencies but that had not been submitted for the CLRP due to a lack of anticipated funding. This list of projects became known as the "All Build" scenario, representing the full list of projects identified by state and local agencies but not yet fully funded.

TPB staff, with help from the staff of member agencies, compiled the inventory that comprised more than a thousand projects, including over 550 highway and transit projects, and a large number of small-scale bicycle and pedestrian facility improvement projects. The projects were identified from 33 plans, including the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's "TransAction 2040" plan, WMATA's "Momentum" and "ConnectGreaterWashington" plans, the District of Columbia's "moveDC" plan, the Joint Transportation Priorities Letters from Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, and the Highway Needs Inventory of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) State Highway

Administration (SHA). In the Fall of 2015, the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group oversaw the completion of the inventory.

Under the direction of the working group, TPB staff performed an analysis to explore what would happen if funding were unconstrained and the region could implement all unfunded capital improvements previously identified by jurisdictions in the region. This analysis explored three future (2040) scenarios:

- **No-Build** – Included only those projects that were on the ground in 2015.
- **Planned-Build** – Included planned projects to be built and implemented between 2015 and 2040 that were included in the current CLRP (as of 2015).
- **All-Build** – Included all unfunded capital improvements inventoried by the TPB, in addition to projects included in the Planned-Build Scenario.

TPB staff used the regional travel model to forecast the impacts of each of the scenarios. The “All-Build” study was useful in demonstrating that attempting to “build our way out” of congestion would not be viable. The All-Build scenario included projects at an estimated cost of roughly \$100 billion. Although the All-Build analysis showed that future highway congestion would be considerably less than that in the Planned-Build scenario, it would still be worse than under current conditions. Consequently, the TPB determined that the All-Build project list was not the answer they had been looking for to address the region’s needs, and that other creative solutions would be needed. The scenario analysis underscored the importance of supplementing any proposed system expansion with other strategies, such as supporting policies (e.g., demand management), pricing mechanisms, or land use policies.

## Phase II: Unfunded Regional Priority Initiatives

The second phase of the effort was undertaken during 2017 after the TPB appointed a Long-Range Plan Task Force. The Task Force was charged with building on Phase I work and all previous TPB scenario analyses to explore ways to enhance the mix of projects, programs, and policies that make up the region’s LRTP.

TPB Resolution R16-2017, adopted March 15, 2017, established the Long-Range Plan Task Force. It

directed the Task Force to identify a set of six to ten projects, policies, or programs that would have the potential to improve the performance of the region’s transportation system and to make substantive progress towards achieving the goals laid out in TPB’s and the MWCOG’s governing documents. These documents included the TPB Vision, the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, and MWCOG’s Region Forward document.

The process for identifying a limited set of transportation solutions involved a series of Task Force meetings and the use of sketch-planning analysis methods available to meet an extremely aggressive project schedule. The Task Force reviewed planning and policy goals from TPB and MWCOG governing documents that were established to guide long-range planning activities in the region and was briefed on the latest land-use and transportation forecasts.

## Regional Challenges

The Task Force reviewed a list of challenges that the region faces in achieving its adopted policy goals, drawn from the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. The Task Force adjusted the challenges to fit the purpose of their work and agreed that the 14 challenges would frame the conversation on proposed projects, programs and policies (italicized font indicates additions the Task Force made to those in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan).

- **Roadway Congestion** - The region’s roadways are among the most congested in the nation, making it harder for people and goods to reliably get where they need to go.
- **Transit Crowding** - The transit system currently experiences crowding during peak hours and lacks the capacity to support future population and job growth without reducing ridership.
- **Inadequate Bus Service** - Existing bus service is too limited in its capacity, coverage, frequency, and reliability, making transit a less viable option, especially for people with disabilities and limited incomes.
- **Access to Bike/Ped Options (Unsafe Walking and Biking)** - Too few people have access to safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure or live in areas where walking and bicycling are not practical

options for reaching nearby destinations.

- **Development Around Metrorail** - Too many Metrorail stations, especially on the eastern side of the region, are surrounded by undeveloped or underdeveloped land, limiting the number of people who can live or work close to transit and leaving unused capacity in reverse-commute directions on several lines.
- **Housing and Job Location** - Most housing, especially affordable housing, and many of the region's jobs are located in areas outside of Activity Centers where transit, bicycling, and walking are not safe and viable options.
- **Metrorail Repair Needs** - Deferred Metrorail maintenance over the years has led to unreliability, delays, and safety concerns today, as well as higher maintenance costs.
- **Roadway Repair Needs** - Older bridges and roads are deteriorating and in need of major rehabilitation to ensure safe, reliable, and comfortable travel for cars, trucks, and buses.
- **Incidents and Safety** - Major accidents and weather disruptions on roadways and transit systems cause severe delays and inconvenience. Reducing injuries and fatalities for all users of the transportation system must be prioritized, with particular focus on protecting vulnerable users.
- **Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety** - The number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities each year is holding steady even as the number of vehicle fatalities has declined steadily.
- **Environmental Quality** - Increasing amounts of vehicle travel resulting from population and job growth could threaten the quality of our region's air and water.
- **Open Space Development** - Wildlife habitat, farmland, and other open spaces are threatened by construction of new transportation facilities and residential and commercial development.
- **Bottlenecks** - Bottlenecks on the highway and rail systems cause delays in interregional travel for both freight and passengers, hurting the region's economic competitiveness.
- **Reliable Access to Intercity Hubs** - Travel times

to and from the region's airports and Union Station are becoming less reliable for people and goods movement.

### **Transportation Initiatives**

The Task Force dedicated several meetings to discussing and compiling transportation improvement ideas in the form of projects, programs, and policies. The early meetings included exercises where members could add any project, program, or policy to a list of potential ideas. Through structured facilitation and discussion, over 80 improvement ideas were identified and narrowed down to 49 different bundles of projects, programs and policies. Members voted on their most and least favorite bundles to reduce the list to a smaller set of approximately 16 "bundles" that seemed most promising, and then grouped bundles into thematic "initiatives." For instance, they developed separate initiatives that included "expansion of bus rapid transit and transitways," "transit fare policy changes," and "optimize regional land use balance."

Some of the projects identified were controversial, most notably the idea of a new "outer bridge crossing" spanning the Potomac River that would create a potential alternative to the severely congested American Legion Bridge connecting Montgomery County, Maryland, and Northern Virginia. To help the Task Force come to agreement, they developed a set of general principles for selecting initiatives for further analysis. In recommending initiatives to advance for analysis, the Task Force recognized the diversity of interests and perspectives among members, and therefore put an emphasis on recommending a regionally-significant set of initiatives, even if some of the initiatives are controversial.

One of the principles was that viability (e.g., political or financial) of initiatives should be a key factor in recommending an initiative for analysis. This stage was designed to determine the potential benefits and costs rather than for detailed analysis. Another principle was that the initiatives selected should allow for analysis of a wide variety of potential solutions, including multi-modal, technology, project, program, and policy elements.

Through an iterative process, the Task Force ultimately identified and recommended 10 "initiatives" for further study during their July 5, 2017 meeting (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Task Force members vote on priority initiatives to advance for study (Photo ©MWCOG).

They designed each of these initiatives to go above and beyond what was contained in the 2040 CLRP.

The recommendations did not all result from quick consensus at the meeting, although five initiatives stood out as having wide support and were easily agreed upon by the Task Force:

- A regional express travel network consisting of express toll lanes and new express bus service on major highways;
- Regionwide bus rapid transit and dedicated transitways;
- Regional commuter rail enhancements;
- Metrorail regional core capacity improvements, including 8-car trains and improvements at high-volume stations; and
- Transit fare policy changes to reduce Metrorail fares for reverse commuting and provide free transit for low-income residents.

Other initiatives were controversial, such as an initiative that focused on shifting some of the region's anticipated growth in jobs and housing to the eastern side of the region to make up for the existing imbalance, which was forecast to get worse. Task Force members from the western side of the region questioned the redistribution, and the Task Force agreed to change the wording to focus on optimizing jobs-housing balance and bringing jobs and housing closer together region-wide. A new bridge crossing over the Potomac River was also very controversial, and the Task Force Chair (representing Arlington County, Virginia) reminded the group that there is

value in adding even controversial projects or policies to the recommendations for analysis, noting, "It's big enough, it's been out there and deserves the analysis that people are looking for. People feel very passionate both for and against it. We need more analysis to better inform ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

The Task Force members approved ten initiatives for evaluation, which fell into three major categories:

- **Multimodal.** These initiatives involve multimodal projects that include roadway-focused projects and programs together with transit and/or shared mobility services.
  - Initiative 1: Regional Express Travel Network
  - Initiative 2: Operational Improvements and Hotspot Relief
  - Initiative 3: Additional Northern Bridge Crossing/Corridor
- **Transit.** These initiatives involved transit-focused projects and programs.
  - Initiative 4: Regionwide Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways
  - Initiative 5: Regional Commuter Rail Enhancements
  - Initiative 6: Metrorail Regional Core Capacity Improvements
  - Initiative 7: Transit Rail Extensions
- **Policy.** These initiatives involve policies and programs, without any infrastructure projects.
  - Initiative 8: Optimize Regional Land-Use Balance
  - Initiative 9: Transit Fare Policy Changes
  - Initiative 10: Amplified Employer-Based Travel Demand Management

The Task Force agreed that several other issues were important for further examination but not covered in the current study, including 1) State of Good Repair; 2) Advanced Technology Applications and 3) Road Pricing. These other pricing options could be a tool for reducing the region's congestion while also raising

<sup>1</sup> TPB News, "Crossing the finish line: The Long-Range Plan Task Force completes its work," July 12, 2017. <https://www.mwco.org/newsroom/2017/07/12/crossing-the-finish-line-the-long-range-plan-task-force-completes-its-work/>

funds to continue to operate and maintain the system and could be explored in the future as a funding policy.

At the TPB’s July 19, 2017 meeting, after considerable debate, the full TPB passed a resolution accepting the Long-Range Plan Task Force’s recommended ten initiatives for further analysis.

**Analysis Assumptions and Measures of Effectiveness**

Building on the list of initiatives, the TPB staff developed analysis assumptions for each of the ten initiatives. For instance, in order to conduct modeling and other analyses, assumptions needed to be made about locations of transit extensions and road capacity enhancements, changes in land use, and changes in the price of parking, among other factors. TPB staff made these assumptions based on a review of previous planning documents and studies, expert judgement, and with review and input from the Task Force. They recognized that the purpose of making assumptions was not to define a specific preferred alternative for each initiative but simply for analysis purposes.

TPB staff then developed recommendations for quantitative measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to assess how well each initiative performed against regional challenges. While the selected MOEs reflect best practices from metropolitan areas around the

country, they were limited based on the sketch planning framework of the analysis and study constraints.

TPB staff used sketch planning techniques, with components of the regional travel demand model and simplified analysis tools, to assess the impacts of each of the initiatives in relation to each of the quantitative MOEs. They shared results with the Task Force, showing each initiative’s performance at a regional scale compared to the performance of the 2040 CLRP. In addition, to determine how well each initiative addressed the list of 14 challenges, they conducted a qualitative analysis of the effects of each initiative using a scale of High, Medium, Low benefits; Neutral [no effect or offsetting effects]; or Negative [exacerbates existing challenges], compared to the 2040 CLRP (Figure 2).

Recognizing that the quantitative MOEs and the challenges did not reflect all considerations, they developed a qualitative evaluation for “Other Factors” for consideration. Based on discussion with the Task Force, these factors included:

- Affordability and User Costs
- Costs of Implementation (public sector)
- Equitable Distribution of Benefits
- Placemaking

CHALLENGES	BASE	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10
Road Congestion		Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High	Low	High
Transit Crowding		Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	High	Negative	Negative	Negative	Medium
Inadequate Bus Service		Medium	Neutral	Neutral	High	Neutral	Neutral	Low	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Access to Bike/Ped		Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Neutral	Neutral
Development around Metrorail		Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	Neutral	Low	High	High	Neutral	Neutral
Housing & Job Location		Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	High	Neutral	Neutral
Metrorail Repair Needs		Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Negative	Negative	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Roadway Repair Needs		Negative	Negative	Negative	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Incidents and Safety		Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High
Pedestrian & Bicyclist Safety		Neutral	Negative	Neutral	Neutral	Low	Low	Low	Low	Neutral	Low
Environmental Quality		Neutral	Low	Negative	Neutral	Neutral	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High
Open Space Development		Neutral	Neutral	Negative	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	Neutral	Neutral
Bottlenecks		Medium	Medium	Low	Neutral	Neutral	Medium	Neutral	Medium	Low	High
Reliable Access to Intercity Hubs		High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Neutral	Low

Figure 2. Summary of qualitative evaluation of each initiative in relation to regional challenges.

- Right-of-Way and Community and Other Environmental Impacts
- Public Support and Implementation Feasibility

### **TPB Endorsement**

The Task Force discussed the results of the technical analysis and conducted a voting process to identify which of the ten initiatives they would advance to the TPB for its endorsement. During the October 2017 meeting, Task Force members discussed the process for making a recommendation for TPB action, including a discussion of what TPB endorsement of initiatives and future concerted action by the TPB would and would not mean (Figure 3). They also discussed the factors to consider in selecting among initiatives. The TPB was briefed on the draft results of the technical analysis at its November 2017 meeting, followed by a meeting of the Task Force later that day.

The analysis results clearly highlighted the strengths of several of the policy-based initiatives, including the land use-focused initiative and travel demand management initiative in terms of addressing many of the regional challenges and achieving the most significant performance benefits. Many of the other initiatives showed more modest improvements or potential for addressing some challenges but not

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

TPB staff used quantitative measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to assess how well each initiative performed against regional challenges. MOEs included:

- Average Travel Time per Trip: Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV), High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), Transit
- Vehicle Hours of Delay
- Number of Jobs Accessible within 45 Commute: By Transit, By Auto
- Mode Share for Commuting: SOV, HOV, Transit, Non-Motorized
- Travel on Reliable Modes
- Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT): Daily VMT, Daily VMT per Capita



*Figure 3 Task Force members review the analysis results and discuss the tradeoffs of recommending different sets of initiatives. (Photo ©MWCOG).*

others, making it challenging to determine a ranked priority list.

The Task Force agreed to a process for selecting initiatives for TPB's endorsement, which they implemented as follows:

- The Task Force began with a straw poll in which each member was free to select any number of the ten initiatives to recommend to move forward to the TPB for endorsement, using a "yes" vote to move forward. In addition, for each initiative a member chose to advance, the member indicated a level of priority as supplemental information. Members were encouraged to use the initiatives' quantitative and qualitative evaluations to support their recommendations.
- The Task Force then selected initiatives that were supported by at least two thirds of the members to forward to the TPB.
- They then had an opportunity to discuss other initiatives that fell short of the two-thirds support but were rated as high priority by those who supported them to consider expanding the list. This discussion enabled a fuller understanding of priorities among members in order to help the Task Force to reach consensus on a final list of initiatives.
- The process agreed upon by the Task Force allowed them to hold a second round of voting to support the final list of initiatives recommended, if needed. However, a second round of quantitative voting was not needed.



At the December 6, 2017 meeting of the Task Force, the members agreed to advance five of the ten initiatives to the TPB for its endorsement for future concerted TPB action (the titles were later re-focused to be action-oriented as follows):

- Express Travel Network (“Expand Express Highway Network”)
- Regionwide Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways (“Expand Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways”)
- Metrorail Regional Core Capacity Improvements (“Move More People on Metrorail”)
- Optimize Land-Use Balance (“Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together”)
- Amplified Employer-Based Travel Demand Management (“Provide More Telecommuting and Other Options for Commuting”)

### **TPB Approval**

At the December 20, 2017 meeting of the TPB, the board passed a resolution proclaiming that the TPB “endorses the...five initiatives, found to have the most potential to significantly improve the performance of the region’s transportation system compared to current plans and programs, for future concerted TPB action, and directs staff to include these initiatives in the aspirational element of the TPB’s LRTP, Visualize 2045.”

During the January 2018 meeting of the TPB, two additional aspirational initiatives were added focusing on regional pedestrian and bicycle improvements: “Improve Walk and Bike Access to Transit” and “Complete the National Capital Trail.” The Long-Range Plan Task Force had previously decided not to conduct analysis of initiatives that would be exclusively focused on non-motorized improvements. Nonetheless, TPB members envisioned that the development of an aspirational element for the 2018 long-range plan should include non-motorized initiatives that would stand on their own and be shown to have an impact at the regional level. Therefore, the identification of non-motorized “priority initiatives” was placed on a separate track from the activities of the Task Force.

### **Phase III: Incorporate Regional Priority Initiatives into the Region’s Long-Range Plan and Promote Implementation**

The Visualize 2045 long-range plan for the

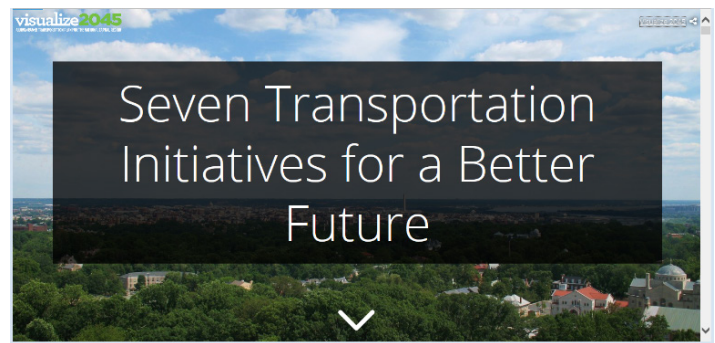


Figure 4. As part of public involvement for Visualize 2045, the TPB developed an interactive presentation and “story map” to highlight the seven initiatives and help the public visualize what they would look like in the future.

Washington, DC region took this effort to heart in calling for a new way of planning that thinks outside the box. The public involvement for the long-range plan, which included public open houses, a web site, and an interactive web presentation, highlighted the seven regional initiatives, so the public could “think big” in envisioning the future. The TPB approved the Visualize 2045 Plan in October 2018 (Figure 4).

For the first time, the long-range plan not only included a constrained list of projects, but also added a chapter on the “Aspirational Element,” which discusses each of the seven regional initiatives. The public involvement effort and the resulting plan provided concepts for the public to “visualize the future” of these initiatives, leading to less congestion, faster trips, speedier bus service, expanded access to jobs, safe and comfortable walking and biking, and many other benefits.

In addition to having an aspirational component, the fiscally constrained element of Visualize 2045 also integrates new projects that relate to these initiatives. This element consists of more than 600 highway and transit projects, as well as the costs of operating and maintaining the system, totaling \$291 billion through 2045. The new major additions to the plan that draw upon the vision of the initiatives include:

- In Maryland, the addition of managed toll lanes on I-495 and I-270.
- In Montgomery County, five additional segments to its Bus Rapid Transit network.
- In Virginia, changing the completion date and the number of high occupancy toll lanes in each

direction on the northern portion of I-495.

- In the District of Columbia, six additional segments to its bicycle lane network.
- For WMATA, improvements to add capacity to the Metrorail system, such as running 100 percent eight-car trains during peak periods.

### Stakeholder Collaboration

Collaboration by the members of the Long-Range Plan Task Force was critical to the development and adoption of the regional initiatives that were included in Visualize 2045. The Task Force members, each representing very diverse interests across different states and jurisdictions, worked together collegially and collaboratively to think about solutions from a regional perspective. This effort went beyond the traditional effort to identify projects in individual jurisdictions and involved working together to generate ideas and analyze potential regionally significant projects, programs, and policies.

While some Task Force members were not in support of every initiative that went forward for analysis, the Long-Range Plan Task Force decided to analyze those initiatives that were regional in nature and were believed to have the potential for regionally significant

effects. While the interpretation of the results of the analysis varied across members, they were able to work together to identify a core set of regional initiatives that they could agree upon as priorities. The leadership of the Task Force Chair and TPB staff were critical to developing this collaborative approach.

### Key Outcomes

The resulting long-range plan identifies projects, programs, and policies that previously had not been explored or included in the funded plan. It also goes above and beyond previous plans by featuring unfunded initiatives that have the potential to significantly improve the region's transportation system and that the region agrees are worth pursuing. In addition to including the initiatives in the aspirational element of Visualize 2045, the TPB resolved that staff should use the initiatives "as a factor in selecting projects for the TPB's Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) Program and the federally funded Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program," to help ensure these initiatives are priorities through activities that the TPB directs. The TPB also has held discussions regarding opportunities for local jurisdictions to advance investments, programs, and policies in support of the regional initiatives.

## For more information

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### Resources

- **Visualize 2045**  
<https://www.mwcog.org/visualize2045/>
- **Long-Range Plan Task Force**  
<https://www.mwcog.org/committees/lrptf/>