



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee  
**FROM:** John Swanson, Transportation Planner  
 Michael Farrell, Transportation Planner  
 Nicole McCall, Regional Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Projects recommended for funding in FY 2019 in the District of Columbia under the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program  
**DATE:** October 5, 2018

**SUMMARY**

Under the federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program, the TPB is responsible for selecting projects using sub-allocated funding for Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The TA Set Aside, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, was previously known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and that name is commonly still used.

For FY 2019, four applications were received from D.C. applicants for a combined request of \$1,190,000 in funding. This year’s TA Set Aside sub-allocation for D.C. is \$1,190,000, which means that funding is available to fully fund all the applications. Based upon a review of the applications, staff is recommending full funding for all the projects, which are listed below:

Project	Sponsor	Total Cost	TAP Funding Request (80%)	Recommendation
Palisades (Glen Echo) Trolley Trail Preliminary Design	District Department of Transportation	\$1,053,806	\$600,000	\$600,000
Capital Crescent and C&O Canal - Georgetown Trail Improvements	Georgetown Business Improvement District	\$180,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Rock Creek Park Military Road Feasibility Study	National Park Service	\$240,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Union Station Legionnaires and Interior Restoration	District Department of Transportation	\$288,000	\$240,000	\$240,000

## **BACKGROUND**

The Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program was established by federal law to fund a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, safe routes to school (SRTS) projects, community improvements, and environmental mitigation. MAP 21, the surface transportation legislation enacted in 2012, established the program as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act of 2015 renamed the program as the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program, but the key features of the program largely remain the same. Information on the TA Set Aside is available from FHWA at: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/).

The program provides sub-allocated funding for large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB (classified as “Transportation Management Areas”) to fund local projects. In addition to these sub-allocated funds, a portion of the TA Set Aside funding is reserved for statewide project selection, which is conducted by the state departments of transportation.

For the National Capital Region, the program offers an opportunity to support and enhance regional planning activities. At the direction of the TPB, our region’s TA Set Aside is framed as a complementary component of the TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, which provides technical assistance for small planning studies to TPB member jurisdictions.

The TA Set Aside offers the region the ability to fund projects that support regional priorities and goals. Applicants from the National Capital Region are asked to show how their projects will serve regional criteria when they seek TA Set Aside funds. The criteria, which are rooted in TPB policies and programs, include: focus on expanding transportation options; support for Regional Activity Centers; access to high-capacity transit; access in Equity Emphasis Areas; support for the National Capital Trail; and increased access for people with disabilities.

## **FY 2018 SOLICITATION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

For FY 2019 in the District of Columbia, DDOT informed TPB staff that the TPB has responsibility for project selection for \$1.19 million. DDOT has discretion for decision-making over the remainder of the funds which will be used for Safe Routes to School projects.

DDOT conducted the project solicitation for the FY2019 TA Set-Aside funding during the summer of this year. The applications were due on August 15. The DDOT application included a supplementary form requesting information about how projects address the TPB’s regional priorities, including promoting non-motorized circulation within Activity Centers, enhancing access to transit stations, and increasing multimodal transportation options.

DDOT received four applications, representing a combined total of \$1,190,000. This requested amount is precisely equivalent to the amount available in FY 2019 for TPB project selection.

The federal regulations for the TA Set-Aside require a 20% local match. For all four applications, the match has been provided and, in some cases, the match amount exceeds 20%.

Federal regulations typically prohibit state DOTs from receiving TAP funding. However, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has ruled that DDOT, in its function as a department of local government, is eligible to apply for TAP funding. DDOT was an applicant for two projects in this funding round.

## APPLICATION REVIEW

Because there is sufficient funding for all this year's applications for the DC TA-Set Aside Program, TPB staff determined it would not be necessary to convene a selection review panel. Nonetheless, a thorough review of the applications was conducted to ensure they are appropriate for funding and help to promote the region's transportation policies.

The review process was conducted in two ways:

- *Application review:* In addition to conducting an internal staff review, TPB staff sought input from our agency partners who would typically have been asked to participate in a selection panel. In recent years, these panels have typically included representatives from the two state DOTs that are not the location of the applications under consideration. Therefore, staff asked representatives from the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Virginia Department of Transportation to provide comments about the projects and submit questions for further investigation.
- *Interviews with applicants:* TPB and DDOT staff jointly conducted conference calls with each of the project applicants to discuss the details of their proposals, get answers to questions that were raised in our review of the applications, and explore the ways in which these projects serve regional policies.

## FY 2019 PROJECTS

Based upon this review process, staff is recommending full funding for the four projects briefly described below.

- **Palisades (Glen Echo) Trolley Trail Preliminary Design**  
*District Department of Transportation, \$600,000*  
This project will complete preliminary designs for the first phase of a multi-use trail along a former streetcar line that originally connected Georgetown to Glen Echo Park. Much of this project will focus on the rehabilitation of the Historic Foundry Trestle Bridge, originally built in 1986, and currently in a state of deterioration. In addition, the project will develop designs for the first phase of the proposed Palisades (Glen Echo) Trolley Trail, providing access between Foxhall Road, Canal Road, and Georgetown. which was included in DDOT's 2005 bicycle Master Plan and in DDOT's 2015 moveDC long-range plan. The segment covered by this first phase, which is 3.5 miles in length, is between Foxhall Road and Prospect Street, NW. The project is within the Georgetown Activity Center and across the river from the Rosslyn Activity Center. It is less than ½ mile from the National Capital Trail.

- Capital Crescent and C and O Canal - Georgetown Trail Improvements**  
*Georgetown Business Improvement District, \$150,000*  
 Building upon recent improvements, this project will create a new trailhead at the Georgetown connection point of the Capital Crescent Trail and the C& O Canal towpath, two of the most heavily travelled bicycle and pedestrian trail routes in the region. TAP grant funding will be used to fund a suite of improvements including landscaping, planting, lighting, a trailhead meeting area, and an improved staircase. The location, which is currently in a neglected condition, is located where the remnant Aqueduct Bridge, Capital Crescent Trail, and Water Street intersect. The project lies directly on the National Capital Trail network and is within the Georgetown Activity Center.
- Rock Creek Park Military Road Feasibility Study**  
*National Park Service, \$200,000*  
 Military Road is the primary east-west connector through Rock Creek Park and it currently is inhospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists. A feasibility study funded through this grant will evaluate conceptual alignments for the construction of a multi-use trail, which was identified as a priority in the 2016 NPS paved Trails Study and recommend in moveDC. The project will study a length of 1.3 miles between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Oregon Avenue. The project would connect one of the TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas on the east of Rock Creek Park.
- Union Station Front Portico Roman Legionnaires & Vestibules Restoration**  
*District Department of Transportation, \$240,000*  
 This restoration project represents another important step in preserving and maintaining Union Station, an essential link in our region's transportation system. The project will complete a series of tasks that were initiated with repairs to the station's ceiling following the earthquake of 2011. Building on restoration efforts funded with previous TAP grants, this project will fund vital restoration of the station's vestibules and entryway statues. Preservation of Union Station will serve myriad policy priorities of the TPB, including promoting Regional Activity Centers, Equity Emphasis Areas, access to transit and proximity to the National Capital Trail.

## NEXT STEPS

Following the TPB's action on the FY 2019 recommendations, which is scheduled for October 17, TPB staff will forward information regarding the approval to DDOT, which will proceed with project implementation.