



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee  
**FROM:** John Swanson, Transportation Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Projects recommended for funding in FY 2018 in Maryland under the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program  
**DATE:** September 8, 2017

**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 2018, the TPB is responsible for project selection for \$1,663,312 in Maryland. A selection panel has recommended that the following projects be approved by the TPB at its meeting on September 20, 2017.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Jurisdiction/Agency</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Central Avenue Connector Trail (Phase I)	Prince George’s County	\$640,000
Bike Share Program (Phase I)	Prince George’s County	\$681,066
Brunswick Sidewalk Improvements (Safe Routes to School)	City of Brunswick	\$92,206
Hollywood Road Sidewalk (Safe Routes to School)	City of College Park	\$43,200
Safe Routes to School – Non-Infrastructure Projects	Montgomery County	\$46,840
Takoma Park Sidewalk Improvements (Safe Routes to School)	Takoma Park	\$160,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,663,312</b>

**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 based on the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* and *Region Forward*. Applicants from the National Capital Region are asked to show how their projects will serve these priorities when they seek TA Set Aside funds. The priorities also provide the basis for the selection criteria that the TPB’s selection panel uses when it reviews and recommends projects for funding.

## **FY 2018 SOLICITATION FOR MARYLAND**

Since the establishment of TAP in 2012, and the TA Set Aside in 2015, the TPB continues to combine its solicitations with the state departments of transportation in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. As part of the annual review process, TPB staff works with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to administer the TA Set Aside for Suburban Maryland.

For this current round of funding in Maryland, SHA launched the solicitation process in February of 2017. TPB staff advertised the funding opportunity through email announcements and social media, featured the program in newsletters and on the COG website, and made short presentations at COG and TPB committee meetings. SHA staff conducted workshops and trainings throughout the state, advertised the solicitation on the department’s website, and provided guidance to potential applicants.

Applications were due electronically to SHA on May 15, 2017. For applicants from the TPB’s Maryland jurisdictions, the SHA application included a supplementary form requesting information about how projects responded to the TPB’s regional priorities including promoting non-motorized circulation within Activity Centers, enhancing access to transit stations, and increasing multimodal transportation options.

Maryland follows a two-stage project selection process. In the first stage, large MPOs like the TPB (those designated as “Transportation Management Areas”) select projects using sub-allocated funds. In the second stage, a process is conducted by SHA at the state level to select projects using the statewide TAP funds.

For the TPB’s Maryland jurisdictions for FY 2018, SHA received eight applications representing a total of \$4,850,211 in requested funding. The TPB was sub-allocated \$1,663,312 for decision-making at the MPO level.

In the second stage of project selection, SHA selects projects using statewide TA Set Aside funding. The applications from the TPB's member jurisdictions are eligible for the funding as well as the TPB's sub-allocated funds. For FY 2018, Maryland has more than \$10 million available in statewide funding.

## PROJECT SELECTION

The TPB is responsible for completing the first step in the selection process described above. To develop draft recommendations, TPB staff invited representatives from the District of Columbia and Virginia departments of transportation, along with COG/TPB staff, to participate on the TPB's technical review panel. Christy Bernal from SHA, actively participated in the panel discussion and served as a technical resource for the meeting.

Panel participants included:

- Michael Alvino, District Department of Transportation
- Cindy Englehart, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Michael Farrell, COG/TPB
- Nicole McCall, COG
- John Swanson, COG/TPB

Panel members individually reviewed and scored applications for a maximum of 100 points. The total score is a composite based on each reviewer's professional assessment (50 points) and regional selection criteria (50 points). The professional assessment is based on each panel member's transportation planning expertise, knowledge of transportation planning in the region, evaluation of the project budget, and project management experience. The regional criteria are rooted in TPB policies and programs, with the understanding that some projects would not meet all criteria. Regional selection criteria included the following:

- **Transportation options** (10pts): Will the project significantly increase transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-drivers? Will the transportation benefits of the project be more than just recreational?
- **Regional Activity Centers** (10pts): Does the project enhance walkability and accessibility within or between Regional Activity Centers?
- **Safe routes to school** (5pts): Does the project enhance safe bicycle and pedestrian access to elementary and middle schools? Has the applicant submitted all the supplementary information for Safe Routes to School-based projects?
- **Disadvantaged communities** (5pts): Does the project promote accessibility for people in the TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas, which were approved by the TPB in March 2017?
- **Persons with disabilities** (5pts): Is the project largely intended to promote accessibility for people with disabilities?
- **Local commitment** (5pts): Does the application provide local matches greater than the 20 percent minimum requirement? Does the application note any other local resources or priority given to the project?

The panel met via WebEx on August 30, 2017. To provide a basis for discussion, each member provided general rankings for each project application (high, medium, or low) based on the numerical

score they gave each project. The group discussed each project individually and asked the SHA representative for additional information regarding the applications. The panel then agreed upon joint preliminary rankings of high, medium, or low for each project. As a final step, the group determined funding recommendations based on these rankings. The final recommendations are the result of consensus. The recommendations are jointly decided and do not simply a quantitative sum of each panelist's individual scores.

At the end of the meeting on August 30, the review panel recommended six projects for funding. A table listing all the submitted applications and funding recommendations is attached to this memorandum.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following the TPB's action on the FY 2018 recommendations, which is scheduled for September 20, TPB staff will forward information regarding the approved projects to MDOT for inclusion in MDOT's Capital Improvement Program.

In addition, SHA will conduct its statewide project selection process, which will include consideration of whether to award funding, using the statewide TA Set Aside funds, to the Maryland applications that were not funded through the TPB's process. For FY 2018, Maryland has more than \$10 million in statewide funding, which includes Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects. Once all selections are finalized, SHA staff will work with applicants to administer funding.

For FY 2019 funding, SHA will open the application period in the spring of 2018 and has tentatively scheduled an application deadline of May 15, 2018.

**FY 2018 Transportation Alternatives Set  
Aside for Suburban Maryland**

**Funds Available for TPB Selection: \$1,663,312  
Total Requested Funding: \$4,850,211**

Project Name	Jurisdiction	Description	Funding Requested	Panel Recommendation
Rewatering of C&O Canal	National Park Service	Rewater a 7.8 mile section of canal in Montgomery County from Canal Lift Lock #20 (Great Falls Tavern) to Canal Lift Lock #23 (Violettes Lock).	\$2,450,000	0
Central Avenue Connector Trail (Phase I – Addison Road)	Prince George's County	Provide direct bicycle & pedestrian access to four metro stations along the Central Avenue-Metro Blue Line Corridor, will provide alternate travel routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, enhance access to alternative modes of transportation, and support safety and mobility along the corridor.	\$640,000	640,000
Forest Glen Road Sidewalk	Montgomery County	Design concrete sidewalk along the north side of Forest Glen Road from Woodland Drive to Sligo Creek Parkway in Silver Spring.	\$248,000	0
Prince George's Bike Share (Phase I)	Prince George's County	Implement Phase I of the bikeshare program in Prince George's will include the purchase and installation of 25 bike docking stations and kiosks with approximately 425 docks and 250 bikes. Hyattsville, Mount Rainer, New Carrollton, North Brentwood, and Riverdale Park.	\$737,362.50	\$681,066
Brunswick Sidewalk Improvement (Safe Routes to School)	City of Brunswick	Replace or install approximately sidewalk, curb, and gutter on various streets on the west side of Brunswick leading to Brunswick Elementary School, and on various streets on the east side of Brunswick leading to Brunswick Middle School.	\$92,206	\$92,206
Hollywood Road Sidewalk (Safe Routes to School)	College Park	Develop 90% design for a sidewalk along Hollywood Road from US Route1/Baltimore Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue.	\$43,200	\$43,200
MCDOT Safe Routes to School Program (Non-Infrastructure)	Montgomery County (seven schools)	Montgomery County's Department of Transportation has identified seven schools with pedestrian and bicycle safety problems. This project will develop vehicular movement plans to better facilitate safe pathways; participate in Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day; distribute education materials and conduct training; and promote enforcement.	46,840	\$46,840
Takoma Park Safe Routes to School Program	Takoma Park	Application included both infrastructure (sidewalk and intersection improvements) and non-infrastructure (education and site evaluation) projects.	\$592,602.88	\$160,000 (infrastructure only)