

**ITEM 13 – Information**  
January 20, 2016

Update on the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** Receive briefing

**Issues:** None

**Background:**

At the direction of the TPB, staff has compiled a draft inventory of unfunded transportation projects that are included in state, local and regionally approved plans, but are not currently included in the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). In July 2015, TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson appointed a working group to develop and implement a scope of work for regional planning activities that will use the inventory as the basis for analysis and outreach. The working group had three meetings in 2015 and preliminarily approved a work plan that includes analysis of the full inventory (roughly 500 road and transit projects) as well as activities to develop a limited list of unfunded needs that will form the basis for a Plan of Unfunded Regional Priority Projects.





National Capital Region  
**Transportation Planning Board**

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Transportation Planning Board  
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, TPB Staff Director  
John Swanson, Manager of Plan Development & Support  
SUBJECT: Work activities related to the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group  
DATE: January 14, 2016

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## **SUMMARY**

In October of 2014 TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson established the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group to find ways to address the forecast underperformance of the region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). The working group, led by board members Ms. Bridget Newton and Mr. Jonathan Way, was charged with two tasks: 1) oversee the completion of a draft inventory of unfunded transportation projects that are included in the approved plans of TPB members but are not part of the CLRP and 2) develop a scope of work for regional planning activities that will use the inventory as the basis for analysis and outreach.

The working group met three times in the fall of 2015 and oversaw the completion of the inventory (Task 1) and tentatively approved a work plan (Task 2) for activities to be conducted during the next three fiscal years. Focusing on the board's desire to improve the performance outcomes of the CLRP, the group proposes to identify a limited set of regionally significant unfunded multi-modal priority projects that the region broadly supports and are expected to improve upon the performance of the transportation system included in the CLRP. This work will be designed to be integrated into the next quadrennial update of the TPB's long-range plan in 2018.

## **PURPOSE**

The performance outcomes of the CLRP are less than satisfactory in terms of addressing the region's greatest transportation needs. The CLRP Call for Projects has identified these needs as:

- Reduce congestion on the roadway and transit system;
- Improve operational efficiency of the existing roadway and transit system;
- Provide high quality travel options between and within Activity Centers;
- Reduce per capita VMT;
- Reduce emissions of criteria pollutants and greenhouse gases;
- Increase non-SOV travel mode.

One of the primary reasons for the CLRP's underperformance is the lack of funding for regionally significant multi-modal projects. The purpose of the planning activities proposed by the working group is to identify a limited set of such projects with the greatest potential to improve regional system performance that the TPB can champion for funding and inclusion in the CLRP.

## WORK PLAN

On November 16, the working group agreed on a draft work plan spanning the next three fiscal years, which is summarized below. The chart attached to this memo identifies tasks associated with the three phases of work.

- **Phase I: Develop a Baseline Report, January 2016 - September 2016**

To provide a complete context for priority setting, the TPB will release a report in 2016 that will present forecasts of the region's long-term (2040) transportation system performance under three specific scenarios:

- 1) *No Build* - system performance with growth in demand (Population and Employment) but without any of the capital improvements in the current (2015) CLRP;
- 2) *Planned Build* - system performance with growth in demand and capital improvements in the current (2015) CLRP; and
- 3) *All Build* - system performance with growth in demand and capital improvements in the current 2015 CLRP plus all of the currently unfunded capital improvements inventoried by the TPB.

- **Phase II: Develop a Plan of Unfunded Regional Priority Projects, January 2016 - June 2017**

This phase will assume that the projects in the current (2015) CLRP reflect the priorities of the local and state agencies and will be implemented as planned. It also recognizes that it is not realistic to anticipate that funding will be identified in the next 25 years to implement all of the unfunded projects listed in the inventory, many of which are local and not regionally significant. As such, activities under Phase II are intended to identify a limited set of regionally significant projects with the greatest potential to meet the region's greatest transportation needs as identified in the TPB's Call for Projects for the CLRP.

The working group will oversee a range of planning activities over 18 months, including analysis and outreach, to develop a set of criteria to help select regionally significant projects and identify specific performance measures to assess improvements in the region's transportation system performance in accordance with the region's greatest transportation needs.

The final plan will include a limited set of projects selected to meet key criteria. Road and transit projects will be taken from the Inventory of Unfunded Projects. Pedestrian and bicycle projects/priorities will be identified through a separate but integrated process that will be conducted under the guidance of the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.

- **Phase III: Incorporate Unfunded Priority Projects Into the Region's Long-Range Transportation Plan, July 2017 - September 2018**

The Unfunded Projects work activities will culminate in two specific forms: (1) the regionally significant, unfunded priority projects will be incorporated into the Call for Projects for the 2018 CLRP. The TPB will urge transportation funding agencies to fund these projects and make it part of the region's CLRP; and (2) modify the region's long-range plan to include, for the first time, an "Unconstrained Element" which will include the TPB's regionally significant

transportation priority projects yet to be funded. This action will help the TPB highlight a limited set of priority projects to be funded and support efforts to explore innovative ways to fund these projects.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the fall of 2014, the TPB directed staff to assemble an inventory of projects that are included in the approved plans of TPB members but are not part of the CLRP due to a lack of identified funding. Board members requested this compilation to help understand the limited number of improvement projects included in the region's CLRP and the limited extent to which CLRP projects are forecast to address the region's congestion and mobility needs. This information was intended to provide decision makers with a better understanding of total unfunded transportation improvement needs and to provide a basis for the TPB to engage in regional planning activities to identify a set of regionally significant unfunded projects that would improve system performance and galvanize regional support for funding.

During the first half of 2015, staff compiled a draft inventory of unfunded capital transportation needs. This inventory comprises approximately 500 road and transit projects and about 600 pedestrian and bicycle improvements that are included in state, local and regionally approved plans, but are not currently included in the region's CLRP. Based upon preliminary cost estimates, the total price tag for these unfunded needs would range from roughly \$60 billion to \$90 billion. In comparison, funding for capacity expansion in the most recent CLRP is \$42 billion.

The complete inventory of unfunded projects and an interactive map displaying the projects can be accessed at: [www.mwcog.org/unfunded](http://www.mwcog.org/unfunded).

A draft list of the region's unfunded transportation improvements projects was presented to the board in June of 2015. While acknowledging the staff's work to finalize the list in the coming months the board discussed how best to use this information to address concerns regarding the less than satisfactory performance outcomes of its 2014 CLRP.

In July of 2015, TPB Chairman Phil Mendelson established the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group. He asked the TPB Vice Chair Bridget Newton to lead the group and requested board member Jonathan Way to serve as vice chair of the group. Chairman Mendelson also nominated as members of the group representatives of the state Departments of Transportation, WMATA, and a designee of the TPB Citizen Advisory Committee. He also invited representatives of the TPB member jurisdictions and their transportation agencies to join the group.

The working group provided the following overarching guidance for future planning activities using the inventory:

- Focus on identifying projects and systems that are regionally significant and will demonstrably show improvements in the performance outcomes of the regional transportation system.
- Build upon previous planning and policies, including planning that has already occurred at the local and state levels as well as previously established regional policies, especially the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

- Conduct multi-faceted planning activities, including scenario analysis and outreach to partner jurisdictions/agencies, and public involvement, to identify criteria for the selection of a limited set of regionally significant projects and system performance assessment.
- Integrate this work into the TPB's long-range planning process by focusing on the 2018 update of the TPB's long-range plan.

## **STATUS AND NEXT STEPS**

Phase I activities in the work plan described above are already underway. The No-Build Scenario is currently undergoing analysis and the project details in the All-Build Scenario are currently being specified.

This winter and spring, staff intends to launch activities related to Phase II of the work plan, which will include a more explicit articulation of a problem statement that will underlie the development of the Plan of Unfunded Priority Projects, and activities to identify criteria for project selection.

The next meeting of the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group is tentatively slated for February 17 at 2:30 p.m.

