

## National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Invitation for Local Jurisdiction Participation in a Regional Bus Stop Improvement Project Proposal for FTA Livability Bus Grant Program

DATE: January 6, 2010

The purpose of this memorandum is to invite local jurisdictions to participate in an application for a Regional Bus Improvement Program for the recently announced Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Livability Bus Program. At the December 16<sup>th</sup> TPB meeting, the TPB asked staff to develop a proposal for the FTA Livability Bus grant program. TPB and WMATA staff have coordinated to develop a process and criteria for an application under this grant program, which is described in this memorandum.

Technical Committee members are being asked to:

- Review this memorandum in preparation for the discussion on the possible grant application at the January 8 meeting (Item 6);
- Indicate their jurisdiction's level of interest in participating and ability to contribute the 20% required matching funds at the January 8 meeting; and
- If interested, identify bus stop locations, cost estimates, and the matching funds by January 13 based on the criteria outlined in this memo.

This memo includes the following sections:

- **Background:** Description of the Livability Bus Program objectives and eligibility
- **Regional Bus Stop Improvement Program:** Description of the need, regional support, and TPB/WMATA collaboration
- **Invitation to TPB Member Jurisdictions:** Description of the process and requirements for inclusion in Region-wide proposal
- **Specific Project Criteria:** Criteria for locations and project elements for bus stop improvements

### Background

On December 8, 2009, FTA released a Notice of Funding Availability and a Solicitation for Project Proposals for \$150 million in discretionary Section 5309 funding for the Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Initiative. "The Livability Bus Program" makes funds available for capital

projects such as purchasing and rehabilitating buses, vans, and bus-related equipment, or constructing and rehabilitating bus-related facilities. WMATA is the eligible direct recipient of these funds for the TPB planning area.

There are several elements of the Livability Bus Program that signal advantages from regional cooperation in assembling a grant package. The program has a clear regional focus through its requirement for MPO endorsement. The program also emphasizes directing improvements to areas in economic need, which provides the region with an opportunity to tackle persistent and region-wide economic disparities. As part of the Federal Livability Initiative, applications submitted for these program funds will be evaluated by FTA and coordinated with representatives from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The application deadline is February 8, 2010, and awards will be announced in early 2010. Grant applications must identify a 20% local match. Projects must be able to begin upon receipt of the grant, and should be readily scalable.

### **Regional Bus Stop Improvement Program**

At the December 16<sup>th</sup> TPB meeting, TPB and WMATA staff were charged with developing a proposal for the Livability Bus grant application. Given the criteria elements described above, region-wide accessibility improvements to bus stops were identified as a priority that is relatively low cost and easily scalable, and also has the potential to make permanent, placemaking improvements in areas of economic need. Accessible bus stops for low-income communities and persons with disabilities have been identified as a regional need by the TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee for many years. Specifically the AFA has made the following recommendations:

- Prioritize bus stop improvements in areas with the highest concentrations of poverty but where bus use is also high;
- Redesign existing bus stops in a way that safely accommodates the widest range of potential users, including people with disabilities and limited-English speakers; and
- Provide comprehensive information (i.e. maps and schedules) at bus stops that is easy to understand for both English and non-native English speakers.

### **Invitation to TPB Member Jurisdictions**

WMATA and TPB staff are inviting TPB member jurisdictions to participate in the grant application process. It is recognized that making improvements to bus stops, such as adding shelters and/or curb cuts, falls within the realm of each local jurisdiction.

TPB member jurisdictions are being asked to ascertain their level of interest in participating in this application process, and determine the availability of local funds to serve as the requisite 20 percent match. For those jurisdictions that would like to participate, WMATA and TPB request that the jurisdiction identify bus stop improvement projects and locations that meet the criteria outlined in this memo. Project locations should be specific in terms of area of

implementation and number of stops to be improved; however, individual stop locations are not necessary. These projects will be included in a broader application for a Regional Bus Stop Improvement Program.

### *Matching Funds*

Initially, a potential source of matching funds was MetroMatters, yet this option is no longer a possibility. WMATA is in the process of identifying other capital money that could serve as the local match. However, this will likely need WMATA Board approval, which cannot be obtained until after the grant application deadline. Therefore, interested local jurisdictions will have to identify matching funds for their bus stop improvements. Eligible matching funds include existing budgets for sidewalk maintenance/ improvements or other bus stop related budget items.

### *Requirements and Submissions*

If awarded, WMATA would be responsible for administering the grant. WMATA could administer the grant in two ways: 1) Participating jurisdictions would become sub-recipients of WMATA, and would be responsible for implementing individual bus stop improvements and submitting quarterly Milestone Progress Reports and Financial Status Reports; or 2) WMATA would hire contractors directly to do the work, requiring WMATA to obtain the permits, etc.

TPB member jurisdictions are being asked to submit bus stop improvements and identify matching funds by using the form in Attachment 4. Due to the tight timeframe of submitting and application to FTA (deadline is February 8, 2010), please submit all forms by COB Wednesday, January 13, 2010 to Wendy Klancher at [wklancher@mwcog.org](mailto:wklancher@mwcog.org).

### **Specific Project Criteria for Identifying Bus Stops to Include in the Grant Application**

Criteria for selecting project locations and project elements have been derived from FTA programmatic priorities and project evaluation criteria, and have been further tailored using regional sources (i.e. WMATA's Regional Bus Stop Inventory) as well as federal demographic data from the US Census and HUD to ensure that selected improvements best meet livability goals for the region.

Map 1 (Attachment 1) shows priority areas and corridors throughout the region where bus stop improvements could best enhance livability. The shaded areas in Map 1 indicate the intersection of locations with high concentrations of:

- Persons with disabilities (compared with the regional average)
- Older adults (compared with the regional average)
- Limited vehicle availability (compared with the regional average)

- Middle- to low-income households (as identified by HUD income eligibility requirements for participation in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, a component of the Community Development Block Grant.)<sup>1</sup>
  - Bus stops which are not functionally accessible for persons with disabilities.
- In order for selected projects to exhibit promoting independence for persons in low-income communities, persons with disabilities, and/or persons who are non-native speakers of English, bus stops should fall within the corridors identified in Map 1.

Jurisdictions that do not have bus stops in the identified corridors on Map 1 and would like to participate should identify bus stops locations in areas that:

- ✓ Serve a high number of bus users (ridership thresholds to be determined) AND;
  - ✓ Have been identified as inaccessible, AND;
  - ✓ Have been identified as low income according AND/OR;
  - ✓ Have been identified as having a significant number of MetroAccess users AND/OR;
  - ✓ Have been identified as having transit dependent communities, AND/OR;
  - ✓ Have been identified as having persons with limited English proficiency
- In order to demonstrate transportation and land use/housing coordination, bus stops should fall in areas that complement related economic development, housing, or environmental projects, including:
- ✓ State/local economic development projects
  - ✓ HUD Empowerment Zones
  - ✓ CDBG project locations
  - ✓ Affordable/Public housing
- In order to meet Federal Livability Criteria, bus stops improvements should provide permanent, placemaking benefits in accordance with local plans and objectives, including any or all of the following, as appropriate:
- ✓ Improved convenience, comfort and safety:
    - Addition or provision of designated bus stop area, such as unobstructed landing pads, where necessary
    - Addition of or improvement of existing bus shelters
    - Improved lighting
    - Addition of bus-stop amenities, such as benches, vending machines, and trash receptacles
    - Addition or provision of slip-resistance finishes, good grip, and sure footing to surfaces to ensure safety

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<sup>1</sup> The primary objective of the HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunity, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income. Incorporating HUD data in the criteria for a Regional Bus Stop Improvement Plan is consistent with the Livability criteria outlined in the Bus Livability Program.

- Addition or provision of other amenities, such as bicycle storage, shopping cart storage, or daily lockers
- Addition or provision of safety features, such as a police call box
- ✓ Improved access to bus stop via new sidewalks, curb cuts, bulb-outs, etc
- ✓ Improved way-finding, clearly displayed signage and other bus service information in a variety of languages and formats and at the eye-level of a wheelchair user

## **Summary**

In summary, Technical Committee members are being asked to:

- Review this memorandum in preparation for the discussion on the possible grant application at the January 8 meeting (Item 6);
- Indicate their jurisdiction's level of interest in participating and ability to contribute the 20% required matching funds at the January 8 meeting; and
- If interested, identify bus stop locations, cost estimates and the matching funds by January 13 based on the criteria outlined in this memo.

For further information, please contact:

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## **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Map 1

Attachment 2: Summary of FTA Federal Register Notice on Livability Bus Grant Program

Attachment 3: Summary of FTA Selection Criteria for Grant Program

Attachment 4: Regional Bus Stop Improvement Project Inclusion Form

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# ATTACHMENT 1

## Map 1: Focus Areas for Bus Stop Accessibility Improvements to Enhance Livability

Data was analyzed at the census tract level to identify areas of concentration of economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, older adults and persons with disabilities. Census tracts were determined to meet the criteria if they exceeded the regional average. HUD income eligibility requirements for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program were utilized to determine the middle- to low-income populations. More specifically, census tracts met the criteria under the following conditions:




- a. No Vehicle Availability (>12%)
- b. Older Adult Population (>9%)
- c. Persons with Disabilities (>15%)
- d. More than 50% Middle-Low Income Households (<120% area median income)

Census tracts that met either any three (3) or all four (4) of the above criteria are highlighted on the map to the left.


### Census Tracts Meeting 3 or 4 of the Criteria

-  4
-  3

### Bus Stops Falling within Census Tracts Meeting 3 or 4 of the Criteria

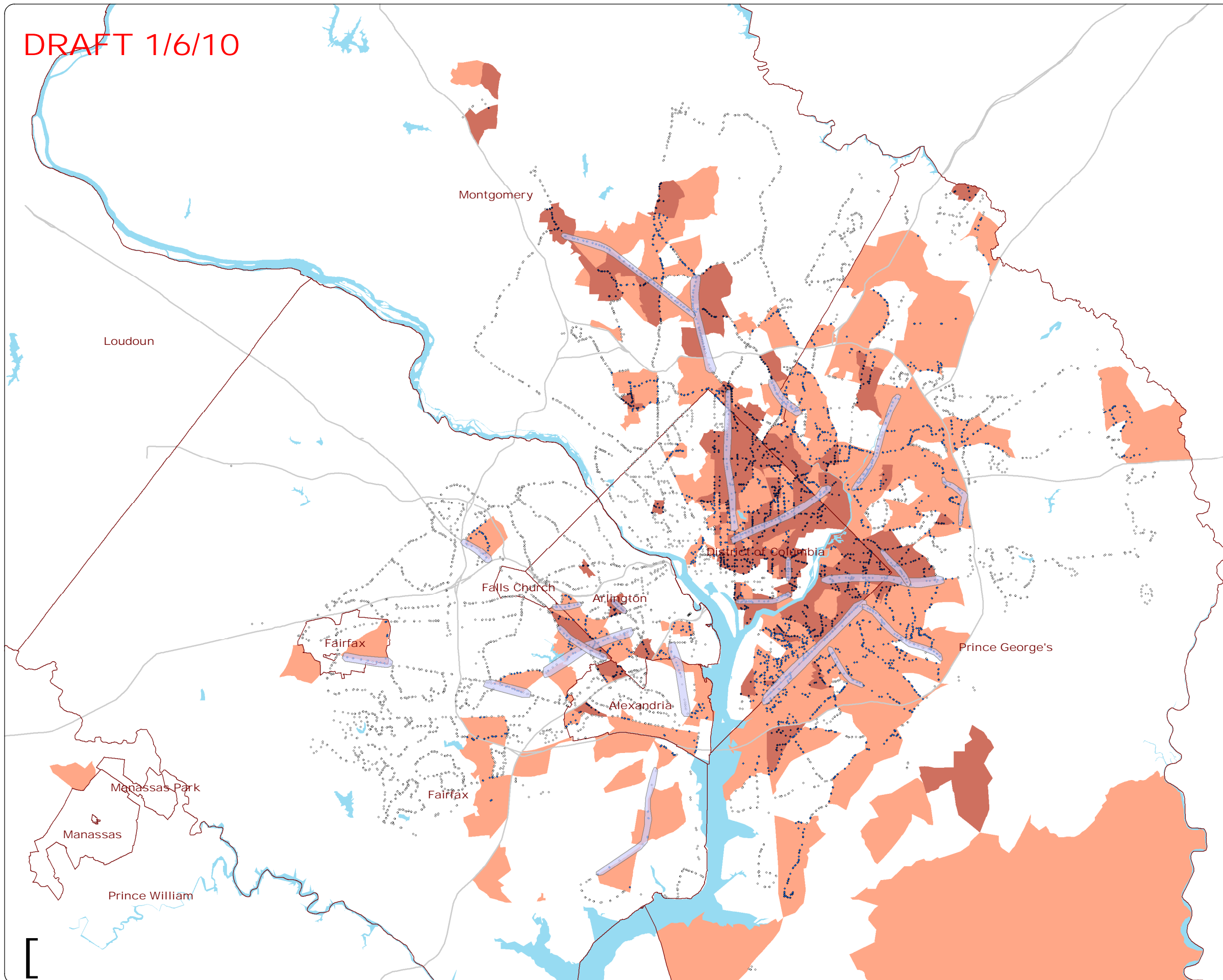
-  4
-  3
-  fewer than 3

### Clusters of Bus Stops Along Routes with More Frequent Service

-  Potential Focus Areas

# Criteria	Total	DC	MD	VA
2+	5,232	1,455	2,817	960
3+	3,677	1,262	2,018	397
4	1,366	772	501	93

Note: MD figures include all bus stops within census tracts meeting the specified criteria.



## **ATTACHMENT 2: SUMMARY OF FTA FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE**

### **NEW FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION LIVABILITY PROGRAMS**

In June 2009, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) joined with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and created an interagency partnership, known as “The Livability Initiative,” to coordinate federal transportation, housing, and environmental protection investments.

On December 8, 2009, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced a grant program under this Livability Initiative: The Livability Bus Program. Through this and other programs, FTA will invest in projects that fulfill 6 principles of The Livability Initiative: provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing communities; coordinate policies and leverage investment; value communities and neighborhoods. Applications submitted for each of these program funds will be evaluated by FTA in coordination with HUD and EPA. The deadline for applications under both programs is February 8, 2010, and awards will be announced in early 2010.

### **FTA LIVABILITY BUS PROGRAM**

#### **Highlights**

- \$150 million in unallocated Discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities funds for capital projects.
- 20% local match is required. FTA will not approve deferred local share. No floor/upper limit constraint.
  - FTA intends to fund as many projects as possible – applicants selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested.
- Projects must be ready to begin upon receipt of award.
- Projects must have a demonstrated need for resources.

#### **Key Requirements**

- Eligible Expenses: Capital Projects to purchase and rehabilitate buses, vans, and bus-related equipment (including ITS, fare equipment, communication devices), or construct and rehabilitate bus-related facilities.
- Eligible Applicant: WMATA (Direct Recipient, Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program)
  - Eligible subrecipients are public agencies, private non-profit organizations, and private providers engaged in public transportation.
- MPO Role:
  - TPB must endorse project, indicating project is a regional priority (part of FTA evaluation criteria)
  - If awarded, project must be incorporated into TIP and CLRP

## **ATTACHMENT 3: SUMMARY OF FTA SELECTION CRITERIA FOR GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Overarching Project Criteria: Livability Bus Program**

The following provides the specific project criteria that is generally paraphrased from the federal guidance for the Livability Bus Program issued in the December 8, 2009 Federal Register (Vol. 74, No. 234, pp. 64984-68988).

#### ***A. Project has a Demonstrated Need for Resources***

1. The overall project has a one-time or periodic need for funding that can not be met through FTA formula allocations or through state/local revenues. The project has not received Federal funding in previous years. The overall project will have a significant impact on service delivery, including providing access to jobs, education, and medical services.

#### ***B. Project is a Regional Planning Priority***

1. The project has been identified as a regional planning priority, demonstrated by inclusion in aforementioned TPB planning documents, and by TPB endorsement (subject to January 20<sup>th</sup> TPB meeting).
2. The project has local support, demonstrated by a local match and by related projects and letters of support.
3. The project is consistent with the service need for the area

#### ***C. Project meets Federal Livability Initiative Criteria***

1. The project delivers transportation benefits and has a positive impact on qualitative measures of community life. The project's impact will be a shared and magnified benefit by potential users in the affected community.
2. The project will enhance user mobility through creating additional and convenient transportation options for users.
3. The project will contribute to broaden traveler mobility through either intermodal connections, or through improved connection between residential and commercial areas.
4. The project will improve existing transportation choices by enhancing points of modal connectivity and/or reducing congestion on existing transit systems or roadways.
5. The project will improve accessibility and transport services to economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.
6. The project is part of a coordinated transportation and land-use plan.

#### ***D. Project Promotes an Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System***

1. The project will reduce reliance on automobile travel, and improve pedestrian and walk environment of a community.



2. The project will improve environmental efficiency or reduce energy consumption/greenhouse gas emissions, as evidenced by expected use of clean or alternative sources of energy.
3. The project will maintain, protect, or enhance the environment, as evidenced by environmentally-conscientious designs in planning and construction that exceed the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

***E. Project Effectively Leverages Public and Private Investment***

1. The project includes funding commitments from non-Federal entities, including State and local governments, other public entities, private or non-profit entities, or other sources that are not traditionally involved in transportation funding, such as relevant public-housing or human service agencies, or agencies with energy or environmental missions.

***F. Project is Ready to Implement***

1. For construction projects requiring environmental work – such as Environmental Assessments (EA), Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), or documented Categorical Exclusion (CE) – such work has been initiated.
2. Project has Implementation plans ready, including initial design of facilities projects.
3. Project can be obligated and implemented immediately upon receipt of award, and can be carried out successfully.
4. Technical capacity is in place to administer the project.

**ATTACHMENT 4: TPB/WMATA REQUEST FOR BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS FOR LIVABILITY BUS PROGRAM**

TPB and WMATA staff are assembling a regional package of bus stop improvements to compete for an FTA Livability Bus Program grant. Please identify potential components of this package and provide information on your proposed components according to the questions below.

The questions are derived from FTA guidance on the Livability Bus Program as published on December 8, 2009.

**Please submit all project information by COB on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 via email to Wendy Klancher at [wklancher@mwkog.org](mailto:wklancher@mwkog.org).** Individual bus stop proposals will be compiled into a regional package to be presented for approval at the TPB meeting on January 20, 2010.

**Contact Information:**

1. Contact Name:
2. Implementing Jurisdiction:
3. Phone Number:
4. Email Address:

**Project Details:**

1. Short project description:
2. Total project cost:
3. Amount of local match being provided (must be 20%):
  - a. Please provide the source of the match (note that a letter of commitment is also required):

**Location**

1. Project location(s) (please specify small areas or corridors)

The project is located in geographic areas identified in the Attachment 1 Map (i.e. Focus Areas or Census Tracts meeting 3 or 4 selection criteria).	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Please provide ridership numbers for all proposed areas (if available):
3. The project must be located in an area that meets **at least one of the following criteria:**

Have been identified as having a significant number of MetroAccess users AND/OR;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have been identified as having transit dependent communities, AND/OR;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have been identified as having persons with limited English proficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>

Areas with state/local economic development projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
HUD Empowerment Zones	<input type="checkbox"/>
CDBG project locations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable/public housing	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Describe the improvements needed (s) (including current accessibility issues):

**Specific Improvements**

1. # of stops in each location:
2. Specify the improvements to be included in this project:

Improvement	Number	Cost
Addition or provision of designated bus stop area, such as unobstructed landing pads, where necessary		
Addition of or improvement of existing bus shelters		
Improved lighting		
Addition of bus-stop amenities, such as benches, vending machines, and trash receptacles		
Addition or provision of slip-resistance finishes, good grip, and sure footing to surfaces to ensure safety		
Addition or provision of other amenities, such as bicycle storage, shopping cart storage, or daily lockers		
Addition or provision of safety features, such as a police call box		
New sidewalks		
Curb cuts		
Bulb-outs		
New signage		
Bus service information in a variety of languages and formats		

**Schedule**

Please specify anticipated construction start date:

Please specify anticipated completion date: