
MDOT's Policy, Funding, and Project Selection and Prioritization Process

2040 Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP)

Every five years, MDOT develops a 20-year mission for transportation in the state known as the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP). The MTP outlines the State's overarching transportation priorities and creates a larger context for transportation decision-making. Development of the 2050 MTP is currently underway developing Proposed Guiding Principles – Equity, Resilience, Preservation, Innovation, Customer Focus – and updating our Proposed Goals – Safety and Security, System Quality, Environmental Protection, and Management – which overlap almost entirely with the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Synthesized Policy Framework. The MTP has a robust public involvement and feedback process and is scheduled to be adopted in January 2024. The MTP will inform every project and program that will be reevaluated and submitted to the TPB's Visualize 2050 Plan.

Transportation Funding and the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)

The Transportation Trust Fund, comprised of various tax sources, fees, operating revenue and bond sales, is the source of "State" funding for transportation projects and programs in Maryland, and federal funding from the recently authorized Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is 26% of our revenues. The Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) is MDOT's six-year capital investment program for transportation, which is presented annually by the Governor and approved by the Maryland General Assembly. MDOT works together with residents, businesses, local jurisdictions, and local and state elected officials to include capital projects in the CTP. Most of this coordination is on major projects that are generally new, expanded, or significantly improved facilities or services that may involve planning, environmental studies, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, or the purchase of essential project-related equipment.

Priority Letters and Chapter 725

State and local elected officials are encouraged to reach consensus on local priorities for the highway and transit systems, as well as transit-oriented development sites, and to document these priorities annually in a letter to the MDOT Secretary. Chapter 725, in Maryland's Annotated Code, requires additional clarity and standards to define how MDOT evaluates and selects proposed major capital projects for inclusion in the Construction Program of the CTP. It requires MDOT and the local jurisdictions seeking project funding to demonstrate the relationship between prioritized projects and the long-term goals of the MTP, the Climate Action Plan Goals (as outlined in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan), and local land use plans. Multi-modal submissions enable local governments to have a greater impact on all State transportation investment decisions.

Engaged at every stage of transportation planning, members of the public share input on the process as well through review and comment periods for County Transportation Priorities, Locally Operated Transit Systems public hearings, SHA public meetings, Local Comprehensive Plan Development, and communications with elected officials and various stakeholder groups.

Additional local coordination – Maryland’s counties and municipalities derive capital projects from approved master plans that are typically several years in development that have had numerous public engagement opportunities by the Planning Staff, Planning Board public hearings and work sessions, or local government public hearings and work sessions.

Project Selection Criteria

Projects selection and funding is determined by several factors that originate from the mission, policies, guidelines, and goals laid out in the MTP. The Chapter 30 law requires that all transit or highway capacity projects over \$5M across all phases be scored and evaluated before receiving construction funding. These projects must be in the local priority letter’s top priorities and be consistent with local plans. They must also meet all federal and other legal mandates (e.g. TMDL compliance, Positive Train Control (PTC), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, etc.) and meet all federal match requirements to maximize federal revenue sources.