



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

MEMORANDUM

Item # 4

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Robert Griffiths
Director, Plan Development and Data Programs
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Update on the Development of a Regional List of Unfunded
Transportation Projects

DATE: June 1, 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the TPB Technical Committee with an update on the development of a Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects for the TPB and to request the TPB Technical Committee's thoughts and suggestions on the TPB's use of this list of unfunded projects once it has been developed.

Background and Project Status

In September 2014, the TPB asked staff to develop a compilation of the region's unfunded transportation projects. In October, the Citizens Advisory Committee passed a resolution supporting this request and asked that the list be made available for use in public outreach and other regional planning activities. In November, TPB staff reported that it would work with member jurisdictions to gather a list of projects that are in state, local, and regionally approved plans, but are not currently in the Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP).

Solicitation of project inputs was issued to member jurisdictions via members of the TPB Technical Committee on February 3, 2015 with February 27 as the due date for project submissions. At the request of TPB Technical Committee members this deadline for the project submission was extended until the end of April.

As of April 30th, more than 600 projects have been submitted by 14 state, local and

regional agencies from their approved transportation plans. The primary transportation plans serving as the source for a majority of these projects are: the District of Columbia's "moveDC" plan, the Joint Transportation Priorities Letters from Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties in Maryland, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's "TransAction 2040" plan and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's "Momentum" and "Connect Greater Washington" plans. Jurisdictions also submitted other projects derived from various other adopted comprehensive or master plans from the individual counties and cities in Virginia. In compiling the list of unfunded projects, TPB staff excluded those projects that are in the 2014 CLRP and that were submitted for the 2015 CLRP for construction, as projects in the CLRP have funding reasonably expected to be available.

Discussion at the May 1, 2015 TPB Technical Committee Meeting

It was noted at the May 1st TPB Technical Committee meeting that the draft list of unfunded projects (as of April 30th) showed a significant imbalance in the number of projects in Maryland in comparison to the District of Columbia and Virginia because of the different ways member jurisdictions approached this exercise. The District and members in Virginia submitted all projects in their respective plans, while jurisdictions in Maryland largely submitted only those projects from their plans that had been designated as priorities in their annual "priority letters" submitted to the Maryland Department of Transportation. Thus, there are fundamental differences in the source documents and the types of unfunded projects that were submitted by the Maryland and Virginia jurisdictions creating an imbalance in the number of projects and the potential cost of the unfunded needs. Given the additional time and effort that would be required to identify additional unfunded transportation projects in Maryland local plans beyond those in the priority letters, Maryland agencies asked for a better understanding of how the TPB planned to use the list of unfunded projects. In particular, the Maryland agencies noted that the list of significant projects in the Maryland priority letters already greatly exceeds what the state anticipates could conceivably be funded and be completed in a 2040 timeframe. In addition, Maryland does not develop cost estimates for potential projects until feasibility and planning analysis begins.

Discussion after the May 20th TPB Meeting

The Status Report on the Development of a Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects that was to be given by staff to the TPB's at its May 20th meeting was deferred to the TPB's June meeting because of time constraints. Nonetheless, after this meeting TPB staff and MDOT staff discussed the possibility of including all of the long term unfunded projects in the Maryland SHA Highway Needs Inventory in the Regional List

of Unfunded Transportation Projects to provide an unfunded project listing for Maryland jurisdictions more similar to that provided from the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia jurisdictions.

MDOT noted that the unfunded projects in the Maryland SHA Highway Needs Inventory did not have cost estimates attached to them and it would not be possible to provide cost estimates for them. TPB staff acknowledged that many of the unfunded project submissions received to-date from other jurisdictions also did not have cost estimates attached to them. Staff suggested that rather than attach specific cost estimates to individual projects included in the Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects, staff could group projects of similar size/scale together and provide cost range groupings for those types of projects. Such groupings would more accurately reflect the reality of the uncertainties in project timing and level of effort that has been expended to date on some of these project concepts.

Based on these conversations and feedback from the Technical Committee to date, staff has now updated the draft Regional List of Unfunded Transportation Projects to include the long term unfunded projects in the Maryland SHA Highway Needs Inventory. Staff is also in the process of adding unfunded projects in the TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to this regional list as well. The previous draft list of unfunded projects (April 30th) had not included projects from the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan given the need to review and reconcile the information in the Plan. Finally staff is working on grouping projects developing into cost group ranges rather than list each project with specific estimates for individual projects.

Next Steps and Future Direction

Staff sees the development of an unfunded project list as the first step in preparing a comprehensive and financially unconstrained list of the transportation projects that member jurisdictions would like to advance into the CLRP sometime in the future. This list would provide an inventory of these projects and an overall cost range for the projects in this inventory. This overall cost estimate together with the projects already in the CLRP would provide the TPB with information on the cost and scope of projects in the financially constrained CLRP relative to the inventory of all projects currently in the region's long range transportation plans.

Once the inventory of the region's unfunded transportation projects has been developed, a second step in this exercise could be to review this list and identify projects that are particularly important from a regional perspective and would significantly advance achievement of the TPB's goals and priorities. The performance analysis of the 2014 CLRP showed significantly increased congestion on both the

region's highway transit network. Using criteria established by the TPB from a regional perspective, it may be possible to identify a small subset of projects from the comprehensive inventory of unfunded projects that could significantly improve the performance of the regional transportation system in the longer term.

If consensus on a subset of projects from the inventory can be reached, then as a third step in this exercise, the TPB could host a regional forum to explore innovative approaches to generate new funding for the subset of significant projects identified to be a priority for this region. The intent would be to help advance these projects that would substantially benefit the region and advance the TPB's multi-modal goals and priorities as outlined in its Vision and Regional Transportation Priority Plan documents.

TPB staff would like to discuss the potential uses of the Unfunded Project List suggested above with the members of the TPB Technical Committee at its June 5 meeting. Staff is interested in receiving the TPB Technical Committee's comments and suggestions on a recommended future direction of this project in advance of the June 5th TPB Steering Committee and June 17th meeting of the TPB.