

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL PROJECTS FOR THE FY 2023 TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorized November 15, 2021 when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law, for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the FAST Act's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provides a portion of funding based on the relative share of the total State population sub-allocated to large urbanized areas, and the MPO is required "to develop a competitive process to allow eligible entities to submit projects for funding ... in consultation with the relevant State"; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set-Aside Program provides funding for transportation programs and projects defined as eligible per Section 1109 of the FAST Act; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) are responsible for determining the total federal funding amount allocated to the TPB, determining project eligibility, project implementation, and project oversight; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set-Aside Program provides an opportunity to fund projects that implement regional policies reflected in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, in the Equity Emphasis Areas, and related to the seven initiatives endorsed by the TPB in December 2017 and January 2018, which include promoting Regional Activity Centers, improving pedestrian and bicycle access to transit, and completing the National Capital Trail Network; and

WHEREAS, the TA Set-Aside is a complementary component of the TPB's Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, which supports planning-related projects of TPB member jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, a solicitation for TA Set-Aside applications for FY 2023 and FY 2024 was conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation between May 15 and October 1, 2021, with a pre-application deadline of July 1, 2021 and an application deadline of October 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the TPB's TA Set-Aside Selection Panel for Virginia in January 2022 recommended funding for eight applications based on project readiness and eligibility, as well as each the projects' ability to meet the regional selection criteria; and

WHEREAS, on February 16, 2022, the TPB approved the eight projects recommended for \$7,172,892 in funding for FY 2023-2024 in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the TPB's approvals, members of the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (both the District and At-Large members) selected six additional projects from our region for funding; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (IIJA/BIL) significantly increased funding for the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program nationwide, and VDOT has informed the TPB that the increase for federal FY 2022 for the TPB region's share of the program in Virginia will be \$2,696,714; and

WHEREAS, VDOT has asked that allocation of these funds be included in the Commonwealth's FY 2023 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), which is scheduled for approval in June of 2022; and

WHEREAS, the TPB staff and the Selection Panel were able to draw upon unfunded applications from the most recent round of funding to determine recommendations for the use of the additional funding; and

WHEREAS, based on its previous evaluations as well as input from VDOT, the Selection Panel is recommending two projects to receive the additional funding; and

WHEREAS, the Selection Panel has determined that both projects support TPB goals and priorities, especially the advancement of roadway safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Transportation Board approves the following two projects, more extensively described on materials provided in advance to the Steering Committee, to receive additional federal funding provided by the IIJA/BIL:

- Ellicott Street (Occoquan Greenway Connection), Prince William County
\$1,995,470
- G Street Sidewalk, Purcellville
\$701,244



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Steering Committee
FROM: John Swanson, TPB Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Recommendations for using funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (IIJA/BIL) to fund additional projects for the FY 2023 round of the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) for Virginia
DATE: April 29, 2022

Last year's federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) significantly increased funding for the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program nationwide. We have recently learned that the increase for federal FY 2022 for our share of the program in Virginia will be \$2,696,714. VDOT staff has asked that these funds be included in the Commonwealth's FY 2023 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), which is scheduled for approval in June of 2022.

At the TPB Steering Committee on May 6, 2022, staff will seek approval of project recommendations for the use of these additional funds.

BACKGROUND ON THE PROGRAM AND PREVIOUS SELECTIONS

The 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. The program provides sub-allocated funding for large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB (those MPOs classified as "Transportation Management Areas") to fund local projects.

In February of this year, TPB staff conducted a review and selection process for the FY 2023-2024 round of the TA Set-Aside Program for Virginia (VDOT operates the program on a two-year cycle). VDOT solicited applications over a period of five months in 2021. They were due on October 1, 2021.

In December of 2021, VDOT staff submitted 24 applications to TPB staff for review. VDOT informed staff that \$7,054,358 would be available for TPB decision-making as part of our region's MPO suballocation of TA Set-Aside funds for FY 2023 and FY 2024.

TPB staff worked with a selection panel in January to review and score the applications. The panel then held two virtual meetings (a total of four hours of discussion) to determine its final recommendations.

The panel recommended eight projects for funding and the TPB approved these recommendations on February 16, 2023. Subsequent to the TPB's decision, members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (both the District and At-Large members) selected six additional TA projects

from our region for funding. As of April 2022, 14 projects in our region have been selected for a total of \$13,047,618 in funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

In early April, upon learning that \$2,696,714 would be made available in additional Transportation Alternatives funding in Northern Virginia, TPB staff began a re-examination of previously unfunded applications. Given the extensive scrutiny that the selection panel and VDOT provided during the review process in January, TPB staff determined that new recommendations could fairly quickly be developed.

Based on a review of the selection panel's past input, plus evaluations and insights from VDOT, TPB staff identified two projects that would be appropriate to receive the new funding. Staff then sought, and received, concurrence from the Selection Panel members, which is recommending the projects.

The two recommended projects are listed and described below.

- **Ellicott Street (Occoquan Greenway Connection), Prince William County**
\$1,995,470
This project will construct 440 feet of sidewalk on two segments of Ellicott Street in Occoquan. One segment will connect the historic town center to the future Occoquan Greenway, a new regional trail slated to begin construction this fall. The other segment, in the heart of the town, will serve an area with high pedestrian traffic and will add ADA ramps and crossings. The project is in the North Woodbridge Activity Center.
- **G Street Sidewalk, Town of Purcellville**
\$701,244 (*partial funding of a total request of \$2,000,000*)
Filling a key gap in Purcellville's pedestrian infrastructure, this Safe Routes to School project will install a missing section of sidewalk along East G Street. The new sidewalk will not only border Blue Ridge Middle School's rear property, but also connects to existing pathways that lead to the A Street Shared Use Path, which brings pedestrians and bicyclists to the main entrances of the school.

Both of these projects received generally positive comments from the panel members in their written reviews earlier this year as well as during the panel's two meetings. Panel members noted that both projects would directly improve safety, which is a key TPB priority. The Ellicott Street project would provide a separated bike/ped connection on a fast-moving road, which would be tied into a future trail (Occoquan Greenway). The G Street project is a Safe Routes to School project that would construct a sidewalk on a dangerous curve near a school sports field.

NEXT STEPS

The Steering Committee will be asked to approve the two projects described above at its meeting on May 6, 2022. If the approvals are secured, the Steering Committee's decisions will be forwarded to the CTB for final inclusion in the FY 2023 Six-Year Improvement Program, which is scheduled for approval in June 2022. Once all the decisions for FY 2023 have been made, VDOT will proceed with the securing the grant agreements with recipients.