

## **ITEM 8 – Action**

July 19, 2023

### FY 2024 Maryland Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program Project Approvals

**Action:** Adopt Resolution R1-2024 to approve a project for funding under the Federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program for Suburban Maryland for FY 2024.

**Background:** A portion of the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) is sub-allocated to the TPB for project selection in suburban Maryland. The board will be briefed on recommended projects and asked to approve them for funding.

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

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PROJECTS IN MARYLAND FOR TRANSPORTATION  
ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FUNDING UNDER THE SURFACE  
TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FOR FY 2024**

**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**, a solicitation for TA Set-Aside applications for FY 2024 was conducted by the Maryland Department of Transportation between April 14 and May 15, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB's TA Set-Aside Selection Panel for Maryland met on June 28 and June 30, 2023, and recommended funding for six applications based on project readiness for construction and the projects' ability to meet regional selection criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 7, 2023, the TPB Technical Committee was briefed on the recommended projects.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board approves the projects for funding under the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program for FY 2024 in Maryland, as described in the attached materials and as listed below:

- \$1,442,589 - La Plata Bikeway: Radio Station Road Sidepath, Town of La Plata
- \$679,000 - Forest Glen Road Sidewalk, Montgomery County
- \$480,000 - New Design Road Sidepath Phase 2, Frederick County
- \$400,000 - Industrial Drive Path Connection, City of Gaithersburg
- \$224,000 - Fleet and Monroe Complete Streets, City of Rockville
- \$60,000 - Brunswick Comfort Station, City of Brunswick



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** John Swanson, TPB Transportation Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Project recommended for funding in FY 2024 in Maryland under the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program  
**DATE:** July 13, 2023

**SUMMARY**

Under the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program, the TPB is responsible for selecting projects using sub-allocated funding for Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The TA Set-Aside, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, was previously known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

For FY 2024 in Maryland, a total of \$3,523,060 was made available for TPB decision-making. The TPB’s selection panel has recommended funding for six projects, totaling \$3,285,589. The projects are listed below and described later in this memorandum.

At the TPB meeting on July 19, 2023, the board will be asked to adopt Resolution R1-2024 to approve the recommendations below.

Project Name	Sponsor	Project Type	Recommended TAP Funding	Local Match	Total Project Cost
La Plata Bikeway: Radio Station Road Sidepath*	Town of La Plata	Construction	1,442,589	396,712	1,983,560
Forest Glen Road Sidewalk	Montgomery County	Design	679,000	169,750	848,750
New Design Road Sidepath Phase 2	Frederick County	Design	480,000	120,000	600,000
Industrial Drive Path Connection	City of Gaithersburg	Design	400,000	100,000	500,000
Fleet and Monroe Complete Streets (Design)	City of Rockville	Design	224,000	56,000	280,000
Brunswick Comfort Station	City of Brunswick	Design	60,000	15,000	75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$3,285,589</b>	<b>\$857,462</b>	<b>\$4,287,310</b>

\* Total project cost includes additional SHA grant management cost for construction projects.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (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), community improvements, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation. MAP 21, the surface transportation legislation enacted in 2012, established the program as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act of 2015 renamed the program the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), enacted in 2021, reaffirmed the federal commitment to the program and increased funding for it. Information on the TA Set-Aside is available from FHWA at: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/).

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 addition to these sub-allocated funds, a portion of the TA Set-Aside funding is reserved for statewide project selection, which is conducted by the state departments of transportation.

For the National Capital Region, the program offers an opportunity to support and enhance regional planning activities. At the direction of the TPB, our region’s TA Set-Aside is framed as a complementary component of the TPB’s local technical assistance programs, including the Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) Program, the Regional Roadway Safety Program, and the Transit Within Reach Program.

The TA Set-Aside offers the region the ability to fund projects that support regional priorities and goals based on Visualize 2045 and the TPB’s other policy documents. Applicants from the National Capital Region are asked to show how their projects will serve these priorities when they seek TA Set-Aside funds. The priorities also provide the basis for the selection criteria that the TPB’s selection panel uses when it reviews TA Set-Aside applications and recommends projects for funding.

Since the establishment of this program in 2012, the TPB has combined its solicitations with the state departments of transportation in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. As part of this process, TPB staff works with the DOTs to conduct the selection processes.

## **FY 2024 SOLICITATION FOR MARYLAND**

Maryland conducts its solicitation on an annual basis. This year’s solicitation period opened on April 14 and closed on May 15, 2023. For jurisdictions in the National Capital Region, the MDOT application included a supplementary form requesting information about how proposed projects responded to the TPB’s regional priorities related to roadway safety, Activity Centers, Equity Emphasis Areas, transit station access, the National Capital Trail Network, and multimodal transportation options.

For the portion of Maryland in the TPB’s planning area, MDOT received seven eligible applications (see Attachment 1) representing a total of \$4,885,589 in requested funding. An eighth project, the Seneca Bluffs Trail Bridge, which was submitted by the Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts, was deemed ineligible for consideration because the applicant did not secure the required public sponsor.

## PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Consistent with past practice, the TPB convened a selection panel to determine funding recommendations for Maryland's TA Set-Aside funds. TPB staff invited representatives from state DOTs in our region, along with representatives from COG/TPB staff, to participate on this panel.

This year's selection panel participants included:

- Noah Hagen, District Department of Transportation
- Brittany Voll, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Michael Farrell, COG/TPB Staff
- John Swanson, COG/TPB Staff

MDOT staff member Christy Bernal participated in the panel meetings, and served as a technical resource for the discussion.

Prior to the panel meetings, individual panelists reviewed and scored applications for a maximum of 160 points. The total score for each project combined each reviewer's professional assessment (80 points) and regional selection criteria (80 points). The professional assessment is based on each panel member's transportation planning expertise, knowledge of transportation planning in the region, evaluation of the project budget, and project management experience. The regional criteria are rooted in TPB policies and programs, with the understanding that some projects would not meet all criteria.

The regional selection criteria are listed below:

- *Improve roadway safety (Max 10 points):* Does the application make a compelling case that the project will reduce fatal and serious crashes on the region's roadways? Does the project have a focus on reducing pedestrian fatalities?
- *Expand transportation options (Max 10 points):* Will the project significantly increase transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-drivers? Will the transportation benefits of the project be more than just recreational?
- *Support for Regional Activity Centers (Max 10 points):* Does the project enhance walkability and accessibility within or between the region's 141 Activity Centers? Regional Activity Centers are places where jobs and housing are concentrated and it should be easy to walk, bike, or take transit.
- *Access to high-capacity transit and, in particular, in Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs) (Max 10 points):* Does the project improve pedestrian and bicycle access in high-capacity transit station areas, and in particular, in Transit Access Focus Areas? Nearly 300 high-capacity transit stations are anticipated in the region by 2045. The TAFAs are a subset of that list. The TAFAs comprise 49 high-capacity station areas that the TPB has prioritized as opportune locations for improving ped/bike access.
- *Access for low-income communities and people of color (Max 10 points):* Does the project promote accessibility for low-income communities and communities of color? In particular, is the project located in Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)? EEAs are locations that the TPB has identified as having high concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations.

- *Support the National Capital Trail Network (Max 10 pts):* The project supports connections to and completion of the National Capital Trail Network, which is a regional trail network that the TPB approved in 2020.
- *Safe access to schools (10 points):* Does the project enhance safe ped/bike access to schools? (If you believe the project improves access to schools, you may still allocate points under this criterion, even if it is not specifically submitted as an SRTS project.)
- *Increased access for people with disabilities (10 points):* Does the project promote accessibility for people with disabilities?

The selection panel for Maryland met on June 28 and June 30. To provide a basis for discussion, each panel member provided their scores in advance of the meeting. Staff developed average scores for each project and ranked them accordingly. It should be emphasized, however, that the final recommendations listed below are the result of discussion and consensus and are not simply based on a sum of the panelists' individual scores.

## **FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The selection panel is recommending six projects for funding, totaling \$3,285,589. The federally required local of match of at least 20% will be provided by the applicants.

These recommendations leave \$237,471 unallocated. MDOT has informed TPB staff that it intends to roll over these funds into the statewide TA Set-Aside funding, which will be used to select projects in September. Unfunded projects in the Washington region will be eligible to receive those funds.

### **Consistency with Regional Priorities**

The six recommended projects described below will serve many of the TPB's key regional policies. Five of the projects are in Activity Centers and four are in Equity Emphasis Areas. Three of the projects are in proximity to high-capacity transit stations and one of these (Rockville) is a Transit Access Focus Area (TAFA). Five projects support the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN).

Many of the projects are directly or indirectly focused on safety. As a result of the work that will be funded through these grants – including improvements in sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks – fewer pedestrians and cyclists will die or get hurt on our roads. This is particularly true for children, older adults and people with disabilities.

Finally, several of the projects are related to previous work funded by the TPB. Three projects (Industrial Drive Path, Fleet and Monroe Streets, and New Design Road) build upon planning studies that were previously funded by the TPB's Transportation Land Use (TLC) Program. The Forest Glen project and Phase I of the New Design Road project were funded through the TPB's TAP suballocations in previous years.

## Project Descriptions

- **La Plata Bikeway: Radio Station Road Sidepath**  
*Town of La Plata, \$1,442,589 (construction)*  
Connecting schools, neighborhoods, and a variety of recreational and natural areas, this project will construct a continuous 10-foot-wide buffered bikeway/shared-use path for 2.25 miles. The new trail will also provide wider connections to existing/planned trails in Charles County. When completed, every school-aged child east of downtown La Plata will be able to walk, ride, or roll to school or to the park without assistance.
- **Forest Glen Road Sidewalk**  
*Montgomery County, \$679,000 (design)*  
Providing safer pedestrian connections to the Metro Station, medical center, hospital, and park, this project will complete 100% design for a six-foot wide concrete sidewalk for half mile along the north side of Forest Glen Road from Woodland Drive to Sligo Creek Parkway. It will also design a separated bike lane on the south side of the street with a connection to Sligo Creek Trail, a segment of the National Capital Trail Network. This project will build upon previous TAP design work funded by the TPB in 2018.
- **New Design Road Sidepath Phase 2**  
*Frederick County, \$480,000 (design)*  
This key segment of the National Capital Trail Network will undergo 100% design funding with this TAP grant and will be ready to move toward implementation. The 3.2-mile Phase 2 trail segment is between Greenfield Road and Manor Woods Road. This is the second of three phases for a side path along New Design Road, which eventually will tie Frederick City with the C&O Canal National Park. The project will build upon Phase I design work funded through TLC (FY 2020) and TAP (FY 2022).
- **Industrial Drive Path Connection**  
*City of Gaithersburg, \$400,000 (design)*  
This project will create designs for a bike/ped connection across a major expressway – I-370— and will provide connections to Montgomery County’s wider trail system and to three regional Activity Centers. The funding will complete 100% design for half-mile ten-foot shared-use path. The TLC program funded a feasibility and 10% design study in FY 2020, which provides the basis for this new project.
- **Fleet and Monroe Complete Streets**  
*City of Rockville, \$224,000 (design)*  
The grant will fund 100% construction-ready design plans to convert Fleet and Monroe to “complete streets” with a separated bike/shared-use facility, as well as new signals and bus stops. The project will build upon a FY 2023 TLC feasibility study that was just completed last month, in June 2023. The recommended improvements will increase access to the Metrorail, MARC, and Amtrak stations, as well as Richard Montgomery High School.



- **Brunswick Comfort Station**

*City of Brunswick, \$60,000 (design)*

This grant will fund the design of a modern comfort station for users of the C&O Canal National Park, as well as MARC train commuters, and other area visitors. The project will provide a trailhead amenity at this key stop along the C&O trail, a core segment of the National Capital Trail Network.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The TPB will be asked to approve the selection panel's recommendation at the board meeting on July 19, 2023.

Following the board's action, TPB staff will forward information regarding the approved project to MDOT for actions at the state level. In Maryland, as noted above, unfunded projects in our region are eligible for funding using the statewide TA Set-Aside funds. In August, MDOT will conduct a process to select projects using the statewide TA funds.

Once all selections are finalized, MDOT staff will work with applicants to administer funding.

For more information regarding the TPB's role in these processes, please contact John Swanson ([jswanson@mwkog.org](mailto:jswanson@mwkog.org); 202-962-3295).

## Attachment A: FY 2024 Maryland TAP Requests

Project Name	Sponsor	Type of Request	TA Funding Request	Match	10% SHA Mgmt. Cost	Total TA Request (w/ 10%)	Total Project Cost	Design Status
Bradley Boulevard Intersection Improvements	Montgomery County Department of Transportation	Construction*	\$1,600,000	\$440,000	\$160,000	\$1,760,000	\$2,200,000	60%
Brunswick Comfort Station	City of Brunswick	Design	\$60,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$75,000	0%
Fleet and Monroe Complete Streets (Design)	City of Rockville	Design	\$224,000	\$56,000	\$0	\$224,000	\$280,000	0%
Forest Glen Road Sidewalk	Montgomery County Department of Transportation	Design	\$679,000	\$169,750	\$0	\$679,000	\$848,750	30%
Industrial Drive Path Connection	City of Gaithersburg	Design	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$400,000	\$500,000	10%
La Plata Bikeway: Radio Station Road Sidepath	Town of La Plata	Construction*	\$1,442,589	\$396,712	\$144,259	\$1,983,560	\$1,983,560	65%
New Design Road Sidepath Phase 2	Frederick County Government	Design	\$480,000	\$120,000	\$0	\$480,000	\$600,000	0%

\* Construction projects include an additional SHA grant management cost in "Total Project Costs."