

Summary of Comments and Suggestions

Regarding a Draft Project Selection Process To Identify Unfunded Priority Projects for the Region's Long-Range Transportation Plan

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
Long-Range Plan Task Force
June 9, 2016

Background

Over the next year, the TPB's Long-Range Plan Task Force will conduct planning activities to identify a limited number of unfunded regional priority projects that will be endorsed by the TPB and incorporated into the region's long-range transportation plan. This process will include two phases: 1) screening potential projects to identify regionally significant projects and 2) using project selection criteria to select a limited set of unfunded priority projects. Information on this proposed process, including eight draft criteria developed by staff, is provided in *Attachment A*.

At the task force meeting on May 18, 2016, participants briefly reviewed a preliminary draft list of project selection criteria. Participants agreed to focus their next meeting, scheduled for June 15, on a discussion of the proposed screening process and selection criteria. In anticipation of that discussion, TPB staff solicited feedback by email on the proposed process.

Thirteen sets of comments were received from the following jurisdictions/organizations (some comments were submitted jointly; some jurisdictions sent multiple comments):

- Alexandria
- Arlington County
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- D.C. Office of Planning
- Fauquier County
- Gaithersburg
- Manassas
- Maryland DOT
- National Park Service
- Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)
- Prince George's County
- Prince William County
- Virginia DOT
- WMATA

A summary of the comments received is provided below.

General Comments

- Support for the proposed broad approach, including grounding the process and criteria in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, assessing the potential regional benefits of unfunded projects, and adding them to a financially unconstrained priority list in a future regional long-range transportation plan.
- Comments regarding the pool of candidate projects that will be considered:
 - We need to clarify that this process will only look at unfunded projects and will not evaluate projects already in the CLRP.

- The process should consider unfunded projects that are not currently included in the long-range plans of TPB member jurisdictions.
- We should more extensively research other MPOs, as well as processes in other regions and countries. Is the proposed approach consistent with national best practices?
- Scenario analysis, including land-use, technology and pricing, should still be conducted, even if it is part of a later stage in the process.
- We need to identify how we can seek buy-in and support from our member jurisdictions for these criteria and for the implementation of unfunded priority projects. How can we make this process and its products compelling for them?

Comments about Screening for Regionally Significant Projects (Phase I)

- Understanding/acceptance that the large existing inventory of unfunded projects needs to be culled to a more manageable number for further analysis.
- The term “regionally significant” needs to be defined in an overarching sense, not just based upon facility types. For example, is a regionally significant project one that addresses a regional need? Crosses a jurisdictional boundary? Connects Activity Centers?
 - One suggestion: “Regionally significant” should mean any project that affects RTPP goals.
- Comments about projects that would not be included in the draft screens for regional significance, as currently proposed:
 - The draft screening factors would focus on large projects and would largely eliminate walking and bicycling connections. The definition of “regionally significant projects” should be expanded to include any project in an Activity Center.
 - Jurisdictional transit routes that are not Metrobus-operated would not be included. Consider including such projects.
 - “BRT-lite” projects that do not travel on a fixed guideway would not be included. Consider using the term “high-capacity transit” to be inclusive of such projects.

Comments about Using Criteria to Select Projects (Phase II)

- The criteria should be better connected to regional goals. It appears that the measures are driving the process rather than goals driving the measures.
 - The criteria table should be re-framed so it begins with RTPP goals. Each goal should then be linked to a minimal number of criteria, preferably just one for each goal.
- Staff needs to clarify how the criteria will be applied in project selection.
 - Some comments conveyed a sense of confusion about how staff has proposed to use the criteria to identify (and map) needs and opportunities in specific locations, and then qualitatively assess candidate projects to determine whether they address those needs. A diagram is needed to explain the proposed process for applying the criteria.
 - Information is lacking about whether and how scoring and weighting might be applied to the criteria. Weighting and scoring is typically used with such criteria.

- There is no information about comparative weighting between criteria.
 - There is no indication that comparable impacts will be scalable within specific criteria.
 - There is no way to distinguish the potential criticality of impacts.
- Comments about the degree to which the TPB criteria should be compatible with the Virginia project selection criteria and processes (HB2, HB 599, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority [NVTA] process):
 - The TPB's proposed criteria are duplicative of the selection criteria used by the NVTA; Therefore the TPB should use the NVTA process (*Attachment B*).
 - Comment in contrast: The TPB geography has unique needs and therefore the TPB project selection criteria/process should be different than those used at state, local and subregional levels.
 - The TPB draft criteria and Virginia criteria generally seem complementary. However it would be worth examining the Virginia processes more closely to see if some additional aspects might be applied to the entire region.
- Other comments/concerns about the list of draft criteria:
 - There are too many criteria on the list.
 - The criteria may conflict with each other.
 - The criteria should cover both mobility and accessibility.
 - The criteria need to reflect all modes.
 - Some regional priorities cannot be modeled, but still should be considered as part of project selection.

Comments about Specific Criteria under Phase II

- *Draft Criterion #1: Increase Person Throughput*
 - In addition to person throughput, vehicle throughput should be measured.
- *Draft Criterion #2: Provide Targeted Congestion Relief*
 - The focus on congestion could favor roadway projects exclusively.
 - Use travel time reliability as a measure. It can be universally applied across road and transit projects.
- *Draft Criterion #3: Increase the Use of Non-SOV Travel Modes*
 - This measure could be very easily used to justify road projects that include bicycle and pedestrian paths; a better measure would be mode choice.
 - This is a yes/no filter that any project could be made to align with.
- *Draft Criterion #4: Connect Activity Centers*
 - Two contrasting comments:
 - This criterion should also focus on mobility within Activity Centers not just between Activity Centers.
 - It is good that this criterion focuses on connections between Activity Centers and not within Activity Centers
- *Draft Criterion #5: Improve Access to Environmental Justice Communities*

- The basis for this criterion (Environmental Justice Communities of Concern) is undefined and unclear. No information about the location and selection of such communities has been provided.
- *Draft Criterion #6: Improve Safety*
 - Incorporate state of good repair
- *Draft Criterion #7: Address Freight Needs*
 - Consider including connections to the airports, ports and rail.
- *Draft Criterion #8: Improve Non-Motorized Connectivity*
 - As the last point on the criteria list, non-motorized connectivity seems like an afterthought.
 - This should be added to #4 so that it includes connections between Activity Centers and circulation within Activity Centers.
 - This appears to be duplicative with #3. It could lead to double counting.
- Suggested criteria not (apparently) included in the draft list:
 - Reducing/minimizing commute times and/or commute distances
 - Bridging the east/west regional divide
 - Address security and/or evacuation
 - Funding availability
 - Project readiness
 - Land-use implications
 - Geographical balance
 - Modal balance
- A proposal for identifying criteria that are clearly derived from RTPP goals was submitted by Allison Davis (WMATA), Dan Emerine (DC Office of Planning), and Dan Malouff (Arlington):
 - *RTPP Goal 1—Provide a comprehensive range of transport options:* Percent of households within a 45-minute commute of jobs, by non-SOV trip.
 - *RTPP Goal 2—Promote a strong regional economy, including core & activity centers:* Multiple activity centers are connected, or there is a major improvement to multimodal connectivity within an activity center.
 - *RTPP Goal 3—Ensure adequate maintenance, preservation, and safety:* There is a reduction in breakdowns or incidents caused by lack of a state of good repair, due directly to a project with that specific purpose. To prevent all projects from claiming this benefit, it may be necessary to declare that projects meeting this criteria may not claim other benefits under other criteria.
 - *RTPP Goal 4—Maximize operational effectiveness & safety:* The efficiency of the transportation network increase, as represented by an increase in the ratio of PMT relative to VMT.
 - *RTPP Goal 5—Enhance environmental quality & protect natural & cultural resources:* Pollutant measures improve, including greenhouse gases. We recommend partial credit for per capita reductions, full credit for raw reductions.
 - *RTPP Goal 6—Support inter-regional & international travel & commerce:* Nationally significant travel improves due to enhancements to the interstate highway system, a class 1 railroad, or a major airport.

May 25, 2016

**TPB Long Range Plan Task Force:
Regional Criteria to Select a Limited Set of Unfunded Priority Projects
to Improve Performance at a Regional Scale**

The Draft Regional Criteria and Project Assessment information in the table below are drawn from a memo to the Long-Range Plan Task Force dated May 12, 2016. This table also includes information (3rd column) linking the draft criteria with the goals from the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

Staff has proposed that project selection would occur in two phases. In the first phase, a full inventory of unfunded projects (the basis for the All-Build Scenario) would be screened to identify those projects that are deemed to be part of a *Regionally Significant Transportation Network*. Staff has proposed that the Regionally Significant Transportation Network be comprised of: 1) Interstate highways and roadways on the National Highway System; 2) all fixed-guideway transit systems, WMATA's Priority Corridor Network and bus rapid transit projects; 3) roadways on the TPB's Regional Freight-Significant Network.

In the second phase, *Regional Criteria* would be used to guide the selection of a limited number of unfunded projects that will represent the TPB's Regional Priority Projects. The Regional Criteria will be multi-modal and will be grounded in the TPB's Vision and Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. Unfunded projects that are on the Regionally Significant Transportation Network will be qualitatively assessed (see 4th column) and selected based on their potential to serve one or more Regional Criteria. These priority projects will be anticipated to positively affect the transportation system's performance at a regional level.

No.	Draft Regional Criteria	RTPP Goal Served	Project Assessment
1	Increase Person Throughput	1. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options 4. Maximize Operational Effectiveness and Safety of the Transportation System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Maps of congested travel corridors with low person-throughput. • Assessment: Projects deemed likely to increase person throughput in the above key corridors will be given credit in the selection system.
2	Provide Targeted Congestion Relief	1. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options 4. Maximize Operational Effectiveness and Safety of the Transportation System 6. Support Inter-Regional and International Travel and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Maps identifying facilities/corridors with the heaviest congestion – separate maps for vehicle hours or delay (VHD) and auto person hours of delay (PHD). Comparable measure(s) will be used to identify congested transit facilities/services. • Assessment: Projects deemed likely to relieve congestion in highlighted corridors will be given credit in the selection system.

No.	Draft Regional Criteria	RTPP Goal Served	Project Assessment
3	Increase Non-SOV Travel Mode	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options 2. Promote a Strong Regional Economy, Including a Healthy Regional Core and Dynamic Activity Centers 5. Enhance Environmental Quality, and Protect Natural and Cultural Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: None (Yes/No) • Assessment: Projects aimed at increasing non-SOV travel will be given credit in the selection system.
4	Connect Activity Centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Promote a Strong Regional Economy, Including a Healthy Regional Core and Dynamic Activity Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Maps of Activity Centers with current and planned road and transit connections. • Assessment: Projects that connect two or more Activity Centers will be given credit in the evaluation system.
5	Improve Access to Environmental Justice Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options 2. Promote a Strong Regional Economy, Including a Healthy Regional Core and Dynamic Activity Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Maps of Communities of EJ Concern that will also include current and planned road and transit connections. • Assessment: Projects that address transportation challenges of the Community of EJ Concern will be given credit in the evaluation system.
6	Improve Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ensure Adequate System Maintenance, Preservation, and Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Maps identifying locations with high rates of safety incidents. • Assessment: Projects that specifically alleviate a safety issue identified by member jurisdictions will be given credit in the evaluation system.
7	Address Freight Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Support Inter-Regional and International Travel and Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Map of the Regionally Freight-Significant Network • Assessment: Projects designed to enhance and/or improve freight movement on the Regionally Freight-Significant Network will be given credit in the evaluation system.
8	Improve Non-Motorized Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options 2. Promote a Strong Regional Economy, Including a Healthy Regional Core and Dynamic Activity Centers 5. Enhance Environmental Quality, and Protect Natural and Cultural Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool: Under the guidance of the TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, staff will provide: 1) a map of a regional trail network (currently under development) with built and unbuilt facilities and 2) a map of transit stations with constrained walksheds (WMATA's station access improvement study). • Assessment: Projects (packaged in groups) that are deemed likely to increase access to transit stations or close gaps in the regional trail network will be given credit in the evaluation system.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Project Implementation Working Group

Approved Project Selection Criteria for the FY2017 Program

I. Background

In September 2015, NVTA issued a call for projects for the FY2017 Program. The FY2017 Program will contain the regional projects that will be funded using FY2017 Regional Revenues.

II. Need for Project Selection Criteria

NVTA staff estimates that approximately \$220,000,000 will be available from FY2017 regional revenues, assuming PayGo funding only. Additional finance options may increase this amount. Based on informal, non-binding feedback from member jurisdictions and agencies, NVTA staff estimates that funding requests associated with the FY2017 Program will amount to approximately \$750,000,000.

III. Overall approach to project selection

Similar to the methodology used for selecting regional projects that were funded through the FY2015-16 Two Year Program, the overall approach for project selection will use four types of screening:

- Preliminary Screening: this is a pass/fail filter. Each project must pass all applicable criteria to be considered for funding;
- Quantitative Score: a composite score is calculated for each project, using weighted selection criteria;
- Congestion reduction relative to cost ratio: uses a combination of travel time savings and project cost;
- Qualitative Considerations: projects are assessed using qualitative factors and considerations that do not lend themselves to be scored quantitatively.

The project selection criteria for each of the four types of screening are listed below.

Preliminary Screening: Pass/Fail Assessment

Screening Criteria
All projects
Contained in NVTA's regional transportation plan (TransAction 2040), or included in the Transportation Planning Board's 2010 Constrained Long Range Plan
Reduces congestion
Within locality embraced by the Authority or in adjacent localities but only to the extent that such extension is an insubstantial part of the project and is essential to the viability of the project within the localities embraced by the Authority.
Rated in the HB599 Project Evaluation and Rating Study.
Initial reimbursement request will be submitted by June 30, 2019
Studies ineligible
Mass Transit projects only
Mass Transit project that increases capacity.

Detailed Screening: Quantitative Scores

TransAction 2040 Goal: Provide responsive transportation service to customers			
Topic	Selection Criteria	Rating Scale (unless indicated otherwise, High = 1, Medium = 2/3, Low = 1/3)	Weighting (70 points)
Reduce Roadway Congestion	Project reduces roadway congestion	HB599 detailed rating will be on a continuous scale of 0 (least congestion relief) to 100 (greatest congestion relief) Rating: HB599 detailed rating ÷ 100	45
Project Readiness	Project will be advanced as a result of FY2017 Program funding	High: Project will be fully open/operational (includes acquisition of buses) Medium: Project will advance to the ROW or partial construction phase Low: Project will advance to the preliminary engineering or design phase	15
Reduce VMT	Project reduces vehicle-miles traveled	High: Project directly reduces VMT (i.e., transit project, park-and-ride lot, new HOV lane(s), new pedestrian and bicycle trail). Medium: Project indirectly or through expansion reduces VMT (i.e., expansion of HOV, transit improvement, or expansion). Low: Project does not reduce VMT.	5
Safety	Project improves the safety of the transportation system	High: Project designed to specifically improve system safety and/or address an existing safety deficiency. Medium: Project will generally result in a safety improvement. Low: Project will have no discernible positive effect on safety.	5

TransAction 2040 Goal: Maximize community connectivity by addressing transportation and land use together			
Topic	Selection Criteria	Rating Scale (High = 1, Medium = 2/3, Low = 1/3)	Weighting (10 points)
Activity Center Connections	Project improves connections between multiple Activity Centers	High: Project improves connectivity between three or more activity centers. Medium: Project improves connectivity between two activity centers. Low: Project improves connectivity to one activity center only.	5
Regional Connectivity and modal integration	Project connects jurisdictions and modes	High: Project connects jurisdictions and modes. Medium: Project connects jurisdictions. Low: Project does not connect jurisdictions or modes.	5

TransAction 2040 Goal: Provide an integrated, multimodal transportation system			
Topic	Selection Criteria	Rating Scale (High = 1, Medium = 2/3, Low = 1/3)	Weighting (10 points)
Improved Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Options	Project supports multiple use development patterns in a walkable/bikeable environment	<p>High: Project adds or extends non-motorized facility to and within activity center.</p> <p>Medium: Project improves existing non-motorized facility to and within activity center.</p> <p>Low: Project does not improve or provide a non-motorized facility to and within activity center.</p>	10

TransAction 2040 Goal: Incorporate the benefits of technology			
Topic	Selection Criteria	Rating Scale (High = 1, Medium = 2/3, Low = 1/3)	Weighting (5 points)
Management and Operations	Project improves the management and operation of existing facilities through technology applications	<p>High: Project improves technological management and operations of an existing transportation facility.</p> <p>Medium: Project improves technological management and operations of an expansion of an existing transportation facility.</p> <p>Low: No improvement to management and operations of a facility.</p>	5

TransAction 2040 Goal: Identify funding and legislative initiatives needed to implement the Plan			
Topic	Selection Criteria	Rating Scale (High = 1, Medium = 2/3, Low = 1/3)	Weighting (5 points)
Cost Sharing	Project leverages private or other outside funding	<p>High: Project leverages private or other outside funding.</p> <p>Medium: Project leverages modest private or other outside funding.</p> <p>Low: Project has no leveraged private or other outside funding.</p>	5

Detailed Screening: Congestion Reduction Relative to Cost

Screening Criteria
<p>Priority given to greatest congestion reduction relative to cost: the Authority is required to give priority to such projects. Congestion reduction relative to cost is calculated by dividing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total travel time saved as a result of the project (from opening year thru 2040) by • Project Cost

Detailed Screening: Qualitative Considerations

Screening Criteria
<p>Continuity of project funding: In general, NVTA funding approval for most project phase(s) infers a commitment to fund the remainder of that phase (or phases), provided that the likely total commitment is reasonably known at the time of original funding approval. Funding decisions will continue to be based on the prevailing project selection criteria, subject to funding availability at the time of request. However, funding continuity decisions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. One exception to this is that NVTA funding approval for studies does not infer a commitment to fund any subsequent project phase, including additional studies. Continuity of funding commitments requires compliance with all terms and conditions associated with approved SPAs, and any requirements imposed by NVTA.</p>
<p>Cost sharing: while cost sharing is included as a criterion for quantitative scoring, it is also included as a qualitative consideration to take account of any conditions associated with other funds, e.g. federal, state, local, and NVTA local (30%) funds.</p>
<p>Geographic balance: a policy consideration for the Authority when finalizing the FY2015-16 Two Year Program.</p>
<p>Modal balance: a policy consideration for the Authority when finalizing the FY2015-16 Two Year Program.</p>
<p>Additional supporting information</p>