

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Principles for Reauthorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs

Adopted by the TPB on October 16, 2002

Address the Special Needs of the National Capital Region Associated with its Unique Relationship with the federal government

As the seat of government for the United States, the National Capital Region has special transportation responsibilities associated with serving the federal workforce and the millions of visitors to the region each year. Federal facilities located throughout the region greatly impact the transportation system, such as the Pentagon in Arlington County, Andrews Air Force Base in Prince George's County, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Montgomery County, Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, the Quantico Marine Base in Prince William County, and the large number of governmental facilities in the District of Columbia.

It is clear that the growth of the federal surface transportation program has been inadequate to meet the substantial and growing needs of the region. The federal government should provide strong federal support for meeting the following critical needs of the National Capital Region:

Protect the already substantial federal and non-federal investment in the existing transportation infrastructure by encouraging a strong federal/state/local partnership, with enhanced participation by all parties, to generate the necessary resources to meet the region's roadway and transit needs.

- Ensure timely replacement and rehabilitation of the existing roadway, transit, and commuter rail systems.
- Maximize the capacity, efficiency, and safety of the existing system, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other community enhancements.
- Expand and extend the roadway, transit, and commuter rail systems to support the region's economy and environmental quality, and promote areas of concentrated growth.
- Request that the federal government provide its fair share of funding contributions to support transportation improvement projects in the National Capital Region that reflect the demand placed on the region by the presence of the federal government.

Implement transportation improvements to meet emergency and security requirements in the National Capital Region, including enhanced capabilities for transit responsiveness, traffic management, and traveler information.

- Heightened concerns about security since 9/11 make effective performance of the region's transit and roadway system critical.

Address unmet preservation, rehabilitation, and capacity expansion needs for the existing Metro system, a regional priority.

Since 47% of Metrorail peak period riders each day are federal employees, and many more riders are doing business with the government or are visitors to the nation's capital, transit plays a special role in moving the federal workforce, providing access for the operation of the federal government, and as a critical means of evacuation in times of emergency.

Increased system capacity and redundancy for the region's transit system is needed to serve the entire region, including key federal facilities, population and employment centers, and tourist destinations.

- Ensure timely replacement and rehabilitation of the existing transit system by funding Metro's Infrastructure Renewal Program.
- Maximize the capacity and efficiency of the existing transit system by funding Metro's System Access and Capacity Program.
- Expand and extend the transit system as defined in Metro's System Expansion Program to support the region's economy and environmental quality, and promote areas of concentrated growth.

Address the special challenges of the District of Columbia in meeting its transportation requirements.

As the headquarters for all three branches of the government of the United States, the District of Columbia faces unique challenges and demands. As the region's urban core, the District faces intense daily demand on its transportation system well in excess of that of its population. In addition, special events, such as demonstrations, festivals, and celebrations require that the District of Columbia frequently accommodate extraordinary demands on its transportation system.

- Support the District's unique role as both the federal city and a state by identifying additional resources for it to fulfill its duties.

Overall Program Directions

The federal program must be retained and strengthened to ensure that the National Capital Region and other metropolitan areas can provide effective planning and funding of critical transportation facilities, systems, and programs. Reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program should be guided by the following recommendations:

Grow the Program

- Increase the overall funding level of the federal transportation program by at least 15% per annum to support the region's and the nation's economic growth and environmental quality, and reduce traffic congestion and its adverse effects on families and economic productivity.
- Protect the great gains made in TEA-21
 - o Preserve the strong and growing federal investment in the surface transportation system.
 - o Retain firewalls and guaranteed funding for the transit and highway programs.
 - o Retain the basic principles of TEA-21, including a needs-based transit program and the flexibility provided for highway and transit programs.
 - o Preserve the equity between the highway and transit programs and promote balanced decision-making by retaining the same federal match of 80% for all major construction projects in both programs.

Streamline Program Delivery

- Seek consistency between planning and implementation procedures for highway and transit.
- Eliminate delays in implementation of federally funded transportation projects by mandating concurrent reviews among all federal and state agencies involved in environmental review, and developing clearly defined procedures for resolving disputes among involved agencies.
- Simplify and improve existing federal program delivery mechanisms.

Strengthen Planning for Regional Transportation Systems

- Include an element in regional long-range plans that ensures effective management and operation of the regional transportation system.
- Provide increased planning funds for data collection and analysis to support regional performance monitoring and planning.
- Provide increased planning funds for focusing on the linkages between land use and transportation planning.