



MEMORANDUM

TO: Long-Range Plan Task Force
FROM: John Swanson, Manager of Plan Development and Support
Michael Farrell, Senior Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Proposal for the development of a list of unfunded pedestrian and bicycle priority projects
DATE: April 14, 2016

This memo describes an approach that TPB staff is proposing to use in the development of a list of pedestrian and bicycle unfunded priorities for inclusion in the TPB's plan of unfunded priority projects.

BACKGROUND

The TPB's Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group approved a scope of work last November that called for the development of a plan of unfunded priority projects. This plan will feature a limited number of multi-modal capital improvements that the region broadly supports and would like to see funded. The plan of unfunded priority projects will be completed in mid-2017, in time for the unfunded projects to be considered for the next quadrennial update of the region's long-range plan in 2018.

The working group's scope of work identified in broad-brush terms the process that the TPB will use to identify unfunded road and transit priority projects. This process will use systems-level analysis, which has long been a hallmark of the TPB's long-range planning activities. TPB staff has already compiled an inventory of nearly all the unfunded road and transit projects that are in the plans of our member jurisdictions. Various packages of these projects will be coded and analyzed, like the CLRP itself, using the TPB's travel demand forecasting model. Through this analysis and outreach, the TPB will identify a limited number of specific road and transit projects that will help the region achieve its goals and will address forecast deficiencies identified in the performance of the CLRP.

The process for identifying pedestrian and bicycle priorities necessarily differs. Non-motorized transportation projects are typically smaller-scale improvements that do not lend themselves to regional travel demand forecasting. Often, they are more a matter of connectivity or accessibility (i.e., do connections exist) rather than the congestion focus of regional travel demand modeling. Therefore, we will put together a different but still robust process for considering bicycle and pedestrian unfunded projects. GIS tools will provide technical underpinnings to this process. Work can grow from related analytical work already performed by member agencies, including WMATA, DDOT, and the National Park Service. And the process will rely on the expertise of member agency staffs for their knowledge of these frequently local projects, albeit with regional impacts.

Improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities is a major policy focus for the TPB and from the beginning of this new planning activity, TPB members have called for the inclusion of unfunded pedestrian and bicycle projects in the plan of unfunded priorities.

The working group's scope, approved last November, acknowledged that a specialized process needs to be established to identify unfunded non-motorized transportation priorities. The scope said that:

“Pedestrian and bicycle projects/priorities will be identified through a separate but integrated process that will be conducted under the guidance of the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee. (This activity may largely use the established development process for the TPB's Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.)”

This memorandum provides a high-level proposal for such a process.

PROPOSAL

According to established TPB policies, the region should promote walking and bicycling as viable transportation options and seek to promote better non-motorized circulation within regional Activity Centers. TPB staff proposes to focus upon those policies by identifying pedestrian and bicycle priority projects linked to the following themes and activities:

- *Identify a package of high-impact access improvements within Activity Centers*

Under the guidance of its Bike/Ped Subcommittee, the TPB will identify a limited set of unfunded bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements that are within Activity Centers and have the potential to improve circulation within the Centers.

Improving access to transit would be the primary focus of this effort, which will build upon a 2014 TPB study (funded through a federal TCSP grant) that identified improvements in access to rail stations and extensively utilize current WMATA's station access planning activities. The prioritization effort will identify a limited list of projects that can be shown to be high-impact and beneficial. The final list of priority projects will be likely to be grouped in some key manner, perhaps limited to a list of locations where improvements are deemed to be most beneficial for the region.

- *Identify high-priority projects to provide key connections between jurisdictions and between Activity Centers*

The TPB will also develop a list of longer-distance bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve connectivity on a wider regional basis. As a starting point, this effort will examine the network in the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which was approved in January 2015; the plan identifies a number of unfunded projects for further consideration. The identification of unfunded non-motorized priorities will also be informed by:

- The National Park Service Paved Trails Network Study, which is identifying approximately 100 projects that will enhance or complete that network;
- The Regional Trails Coalition, which will develop a proposed regional trails network that will build on the proposed NPS network, but include non-NPS properties.
- The Regional Bicycle Beltway Working Group which was formed to identify regional circumferential routes.

The schedule for developing the list of priorities needs elaboration, but we currently anticipate that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee would be asked to develop and approve the draft list of priority pedestrian and bicycle projects by the end of 2016 for submission to the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group. Early in 2017, the Unfunded Capital Needs Working Group will compile a draft plan of unfunded priority projects that encompasses all modes. This full draft will be the subject of additional outreach and analysis in the spring of 2017 before it is presented to the TPB for final approval in late spring or early summer of 2017.

NEXT STEPS

At the March 15 meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, members were asked to provide preliminary feedback on this proposal. Based upon the input received from that group as well as the Long-Range Plan Task Force, TPB staff will develop a more detailed scope and will proceed with activities that are broadly agreed upon.