

A Citizens Guide

To Transportation Decision Making

in the Metropolitan Washington Region



National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

2008

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Who is in charge of making decisions about transportation in this region? How do all the projects in the different states and counties and cities get tied together? How can a citizen have an impact?

There are no easy answers. Dozens of decisions are made for every transportation project. In the Washington region, the agencies that make those decisions are scattered across Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, the federal government, and numerous local jurisdictions and agencies.

In the middle of all of these decisions and key players stands the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board—the TPB—which is responsible, under federal mandate, for coordinating the planning and funding for the region’s transportation system.

Understanding the transportation planning process is not an easy job, but we hope this Citizens Guide can help. The TPB designed this booklet to explain how and where transportation decisions are made in this region, and the role that the TPB plays in coordinating this process.

Some Basic Facts

The Region

Straddling the Potomac River, the Washington metropolitan region encompasses the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. The region's geographic area covers some 4,000 square miles.*

This metropolitan region is currently home to 5 million people and 3 million jobs. By 2030, the regional population is expected to reach 6.6 million—an increase of 32 percent. Employment will increase 40 percent to 4.2 million jobs.**

The Transportation System

The region's current transportation network includes approximately 16,000 lane miles of highway, nearly 200 miles of carpool lanes, 106 miles of Metrorail and 162 additional miles of commuter rail. In addition to rail, we have an extensive bus network of local and commuter services. Three major airports—Reagan National, Dulles International and Thurgood Marshall Baltimore/Washington International (BWI)—serve the metropolitan area. The region has one of the most extensive bicycle/pedestrian trail systems in the country, stretching from the outer suburbs in places like Purcellville, Virginia, to the National Mall in the heart of Washington.

Travel Patterns***

Automobile travel continues to dominate our travel habits. Ninety-five percent of daily trips in the region, including both work and non-work trips, are made by car. Automobile ownership is high and continues to grow faster than the increase in households, jobs or licensed drivers. There is now approximately one vehicle for every

licensed driver. Ninety percent of residents age 16 and above have drivers licenses.

But **public transit** in the Washington region is well used. More than 15 percent of all daily work trips throughout the region are taken with transit. Nationwide, Metrorail ranks second only to New York City's subway in the number of riders it serves. The Metrobus system ranks fifth nationwide in ridership.

Carpooling is popular in the Washington region. According to the 2000 Census, 13 percent of commuters used carpools or vanpools to get to work. And more and more people in the region are **telecommuting** – working at home or from satellite locations. The TPB's 2007 State of the Commute Survey found that nearly 19 percent of the region's workforce telecommutes at least occasionally.

Of course, even in our car-dominated culture, **walking** is ultimately our primary means of travel. Regional leaders increasingly recognize the importance of **pedestrian** and **bicycle** facilities. The District of Columbia currently ranks second in the nation in the number of commuters who walk to work. Across the region, local jurisdictions are looking at ways they can develop vibrant, walkable communities by providing a mix of jobs, housing and retail in close proximity, and providing access to public transit and other alternatives to driving.

Land-use patterns—the locations of jobs and housing—have a profound impact on our travel habits. The **urban core** of Washington continues to be our economic

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hub and a tourist magnet attracting visitors from across the globe. Twenty-five years from now, the core will continue to have the greatest concentration of jobs in the region.

But people increasingly are traveling from one suburb to another. By 2030, if current development patterns continue, the TPB predicts the majority of trips will be **suburb-to-suburb** travel. But most of the region's existing transportation arteries—including the Metro system—were built to serve travel between the suburbs and the center of Washington.

Transportation planners pay particular attention to **commuting trips**, because these journeys are generally twice as long as non-work trips, and tend to occur at the same time of day and go to the same places. Therefore work travel has a significant impact on congestion problems in the region.

Less than 20 percent of all travel in the region, however, is to and from jobs. Most daily travel is **not related to work**. When people are not commuting, they are traveling for a variety of reasons—like picking up kids at school, going to movies or shopping for groceries. The locations of these activities are often more spread out than job sites, and this dispersion affects the kind of transportation services and facilities we need.

* Unless otherwise noted, the numbers in this section are based on the 1983 Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes the TPB's member jurisdictions (see map), plus Stafford County in Virginia and Calvert and Charles counties in Maryland. The MSA is a federal designation and is used as the non-attainment area for air quality planning.

** Based on COG Round 7.0A Cooperative Forecasts

*** Unless otherwise indicated, numbers are based on COG/TPB travel demand forecasts.

Who are the Key Players?

Washington, DC may be the power center of the world, but within the Washington region, power is very dispersed. No single government or agency can be said to “dominate” transportation decision-making. Federal, state and local governments, as well as other agencies, all have important functions and powers, but they are individually limited in what they can do.

If you want to get a real understanding of regional transportation decision-making, you need to know about a number of agencies and elected bodies in different parts of the region. Here are some of the basics:

The State DOTs and Other State Transportation Agencies

State departments of transportation—known as DOTs—are largely responsible for building and maintaining the highway systems we rely upon. They also support and in some cases are responsible for public transit, commuter rail, ridesharing, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

A state DOT, which typically employs thousands of people, is headed by a secretary of transportation who is appointed by the governor. The DOTs are the main recipients of federal Highway Trust Fund dollars and state transportation funds, which are distributed to all modes of transportation.

All DOTs are not alike, particularly in the Washington region. Here are some of the key features of the DOTs and other transportation agencies in each state.

VIRGINIA

The **Virginia DOT (VDOT)** has unusually far-reaching responsibility for public roads, bridges and tunnels. Covering more than 55,000 lane-miles, VDOT has the third largest state-maintained highway system in the country. The VDOT system includes most local and county roads in the state.

The **Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)** guides the work of VDOT much like a board of directors. The Virginia Secretary of Transportation serves as chairman of the 17-member CTB, which also includes the commissioner of VDOT, the director of VDRPT (see below) and 14 citizens appointed by the governor. Among other things, the CTB is responsible for developing the Six-Year Improvement Program for transportation. See pages 27-28 for more details.

The **Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT)** is an agency under the Virginia Secretary of Transportation (as is VDOT) that provides technical and financial assistance to Virginia’s public transit, ridesharing and railroad operations.

MARYLAND

Maryland's DOT (MDOT) has an unusual system for funding transportation. The state's Transportation Trust Fund is a unified pot of money that provides MDOT flexibility to fund priority projects across the state regardless of transportation mode—including roads, public transit, aviation and ports. Unlike Virginia, all local roads in Maryland are controlled and maintained by cities and counties. Also unlike Virginia, the state of Maryland, through the Transportation Trust Fund, provides all of Maryland's share of funding for the Metro system.

MDOT includes a number of agencies responsible for different transportation modes. The **State Highway Administration (SHA)** is primarily responsible for planning, designing, building and maintaining Maryland's Interstate and state roads.

The **Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)** is the public transportation arm of MDOT. Among other things, MTA operates and maintains the Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) service that runs trains connecting D.C. to Baltimore, Montgomery and Frederick counties, and West Virginia. Other MARC lines run between D.C. and Baltimore. MTA also operates commuter buses in the Washington region and provides funding and support for the Metro transit system.

Other MDOT agencies include the Maryland Aviation Administration, which owns and operates BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, the Maryland Transportation Authority, which is responsible for toll facilities, the Maryland Port Administration and the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Although the District of Columbia is not a state, the **District Department of Transportation (DDOT)** is officially recognized by the federal government as a state DOT. DDOT has responsibility for the federal interstate highways that lie within the District's boundaries.

At the same time, DDOT acts as a department of city government responsible for local streets and roads. DDOT plans, designs, constructs and maintains the city's streets, alleys, sidewalks, bridges, traffic signals and street lights. It also coordinates the District's mass transit services, including the reduced fare program for students using the Metro system.

The Metro System and Other Public Transit

The Metro system is one of the few public services in the Washington region that operates on a regional basis across state lines. The public transit agency that runs the Metro bus and rail systems is called the **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**.

WMATA was created in 1967 by a compact among the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland to plan, finance, construct and operate a comprehensive mass transit system for the metropolitan area. The board of directors that governs WMATA includes elected and appointed officials from throughout the service area.

The Metrorail system radiates out from the downtown core of Washington. Metrobuses operate on regional routes, many feeding into Metrorail stations, creating a comprehensive mass transit network covering 1,500 square miles.

In addition to the District of Columbia, the Metro system includes Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Arlington County, Fairfax County, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. Loudoun County is also a member of the WMATA compact, although it does not yet have Metro service.

The Metro system is funded through a variety of sources including state and local government payments. The system receives federal funds directly through formula grants, indirect state payments, and special programs designed for new construction projects, preservation or other specially designated purposes. Farebox and other revenues from the system, such as advertising, provide roughly half of Metro's funding.

Many jurisdictions fund their own **local bus services** in addition to the Metrobus system. These include the District's Circulator, Montgomery County's Ride-On, the Fairfax County Connector, Prince George's The Bus, Arlington Transit (ART), Alexandria's DASH and the City of Fairfax CUE systems. Loudoun County offers its own commuter bus service. Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park operate commuter buses through the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). The Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA), a division of MDOT, runs commuter bus service and commuter trains (the MARC service). Commuter trains in Virginia are operated through Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

Local Governments

A county in Maryland is not the same as a county in Virginia. Local governments in the region operate according to different rules in different places. But all local governments are essential players in regional transportation. Here are some of the key roles they play:

LAND-USE PLANNING

Local jurisdictions have primary responsibility for comprehensive land-use planning and zoning. The characteristics of land use—density, location and purpose—play a powerful role in determining the transportation facilities a community needs and can accommodate.

Local comprehensive plans, which show existing and planned or projected land uses, usually include a component (a "transportation element") that identifies transportation facilities that will be needed. Local governments use these comprehensive plans to seek funding at the state level for transportation projects that will be consistent with local policies and needs.

Land-use plans are implemented through zoning codes that divide localities into zones that stipulate how the land will be used. Zoning can also control the specifications of development, including density and building size. In addition to zoning, local governments have other tools to affect land use, such as offering financial incentives to developers. And to the extent that local governments can regulate parking, they can influence travel behavior and land use as well. Local governments in Maryland have more extensive land-use powers than in Virginia.

LOCAL ROADS

Cities and county jurisdictions in Maryland, and cities in Virginia (including Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, Manassas and Manassas Park), have control over local roads, streets and transit systems. (Virginia’s counties are a major exception, as noted below.) When a pothole needs to be fixed on a neighborhood street, that is usually the responsibility of one of these jurisdictions.

In most counties in Virginia, the state DOT is responsible for the construction and

maintenance of most public streets and roads. In Northern Virginia, however, the state has granted one county, Arlington County, control over the majority of its streets and roads.

FUNDING

Local governments provide significant funding for transportation—approximately 17 percent of all regional transportation funds, according to a 2006 TPB study. This money comes from property and income taxes, and in some cases, sales taxes.

Transportation Responsibilities: Some Key Differences Within the Region			
	Who maintains freeways and primary roads?	Who maintains secondary roads?	Who is responsible for the state’s payments to the Metro system?
Suburban Maryland	MDOT, through the State Highway Administration (SHA), maintains freeways and primary roads.*	Counties and cities are responsible for all local roads. However, SHA maintains many secondary roads that are designated as part of the state system (e.g., minor arterials and major collectors).	Maryland’s funding for the Metro system is provided through MDOT.
Northern Virginia	VDOT maintains freeways (such as I-95 and the Dulles Toll Road) and primary roads (route numbers of 600 or less) in the counties, including Arlington. Cities and towns with populations greater than 3,500 maintain primary routes, with some exceptions.*	In the counties, VDOT maintains secondary roads (route numbers greater than 600) except in Arlington County. In cities and towns, and in Arlington County, the local jurisdiction maintains secondary roads, partly using funds allocated by the state.	Virginia’s payments to WMATA are provided mainly through local governments.
District of Columbia	DDOT maintains freeways and primary roads.*	DDOT is responsible for most roads. A limited number of roads in D.C. are maintained by the National Park Service.	Locally generated revenues are used to fund the District’s payment to WMATA.

* The National Park Service also maintains a number of facilities throughout the region.

In Northern Virginia, these local funds are mainly used to support transit services, including Metro, and for local streets and roads in the cities and in Arlington County. In Maryland, local transportation dollars are used to fund local road systems and local transit. In the District of Columbia, local taxes are largely used to support both the Metro transit system and city roads.

Legislatures, the Governors and the D.C. Mayor

Who's got the money? That is often the key question in understanding transportation decision-making. Part of the answer is found in Richmond and Annapolis where the state legislatures annually decide how much funding they will allocate to the Washington metropolitan region.

The biggest chunk of transportation funding for the Washington region—59 percent—comes from state and federal sources. These funds are allocated through the state budgeting process in the state legislatures. At the beginning of every annual legislative session, the governors of Maryland and Virginia submit proposed capital improvement budgets for transportation to their state legislatures. (See pages 26-32 for descriptions of the processes in the different states.) These budgets may include state tax revenue, other revenue sources (including funds

obtained through the sale of bonds) and federal funds that have been apportioned to the states on a formula basis.

Using the governor's budget as a starting point, each state legislature (called the General Assembly in Maryland and Virginia) enacts a spending bill for transportation. Some transportation funding is allocated according to predetermined formulas. In other cases, projects are funded on an individual basis. As part of this process, legislators can promote funding for projects in their districts.

In the District of Columbia, which functions a lot like a state, the mayor submits a budget to the D.C. Council that includes transportation funding. The Council, in turn, amends and approves a spending bill. But unlike the states, the District of Columbia must submit its proposed spending bill to the U.S. Congress for approval. The Congress decides whether to incorporate all, some or none of the District's spending legislation when it enacts the District's budget.

The Federal Government

Even though the Interstate Highway System is nearly completed, the federal government continues to exert a powerful influence over transportation funding and planning.

Federal Highway Trust Fund dollars are annually apportioned on a formula basis for both highways and transit to every state including Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. In addition, congressional spending legislation ("appropriations") often includes specially designated funds—called "earmarks"—for specific projects sponsored by local congressional delegations. Even the



President can get involved by promoting funding for special projects or programs in the region.

Federal laws and regulations ensure that national standards are applied in planning and constructing transportation projects. (See the box for more information on federal transportation laws.) These regulations are primarily administered by two federal agencies, the **Federal Highway Administration** and the **Federal Transit Administration**, both of which are housed at the **U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)**. In large part, federal requirements drive the work of the region's Transportation Planning Board—as you will see in the next section.

Because the District of Columbia is not part of any state, the federal government maintains a unique level of control over the District's government, including its transportation decision-making. Under the Home Rule system of government adopted in 1973, Congress reviews all legislation passed by the D.C. Council before it can become law, and retains authority over the District's budget, including transportation funding.

Other Public Sector Players

In addition to the agencies and jurisdictions mentioned earlier, a number of other organizations get involved in regional transportation decision making. Here are some of the other key players:

■ Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA)

The MWAA plans and manages all the facilities at the Reagan National Airport and Dulles International Airport. The authority's oversight includes ground access to the airports.

Key Federal Laws Affecting Transportation Planning

ISTEA – THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT – 1991

Commonly called “Iced Tea,” this law made broad changes in the way transportation decisions are made, emphasizing balance of transportation modes, strengthening public involvement and giving more power to metropolitan planning organizations like the TPB. Much of the program structure of ISTEA was carried forward in successor legislation, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU.

CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENTS – 1990

According to this legislation, the projects in metropolitan transportation plans and programs must collectively conform to air quality improvement goals.

TEA-21 – THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY – 1998

SAFETEA-LU – THE SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS – 2005

Both SAFETEA-LU and TEA-21 retained and expanded most of the programs of ISTEA, in addition to greatly increasing overall funding for transportation.

■ National Park Service (NPS)

A number of roads and other facilities in the Washington metropolitan region are owned and managed by the National Park Service, including the George Washington Memorial Parkway, parts of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Suitland Parkway and Memorial Bridge. These facilities are financed through the Federal Lands Highways Program, which receives direct funding from Congress.

■ **National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)**

NCPC is a federal agency providing overall planning guidance for federal lands and buildings, and related transportation issues, throughout the national capital region.

■ **Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)**

The NVTA is charged, under Virginia legislation, with developing a long-range transportation plan for Northern Virginia, developing transportation priorities, and serving as an advocate for Northern Virginia's transportation needs. The NVTA has 16 members, including local elected officials and state legislators. VDOT and VDRPT are non-voting members. When the NVTA was created in 2002, it replaced the Transportation Coordinating Council (TCC). For more about the NVTA and long-range planning in Northern Virginia, see page 22.

■ **Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)**

The NVTC coordinates public transit policies within Northern Virginia and appoints Virginia's representatives to the WMATA board. NVTC serves Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. The NVTC is also a co-owner of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) along with the PRTC (described below). VRE operates commuter trains from Fredericksburg and Manassas into the District of Columbia.

■ **Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)**

PRTC operates local transit in Prince William and Stafford counties, and in the cities of Fredericksburg, Manassas and Manassas Park. PRTC is a co-owner of the VRE along with NVTC.

■ **Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)**

M-NCPPC is a bi-county agency responsible under state legislation for General Plan development for Prince George's and Montgomery counties, in addition to overseeing a bi-county park system. M-NCPPC essentially serves as an umbrella organization over the two counties' planning boards and their planning departments.

Interest Groups

Interest groups are active in promoting their agendas at many different levels of transportation decision-making. Some groups are formed to **support or oppose individual projects**. For example, during the planning and development of I-66 in Northern Virginia in the 1960s and 70s, citizens organized themselves into opposing groups to fight the project or to support it.

Other groups are formed to **support particular transportation modes**, including bicycling, transit and roads. Still other groups are concerned with transportation **issues that relate to broader goals**.

Business groups, for example, support increased overall funding for transportation to spur economic development.

Environmental groups want transportation options that will reduce reliance on automobile travel. The list of interest groups active in regional transportation decision-making is long and always changing.

What is the Transportation Planning Board?

The **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board**—the **TPB** for short—is the organization that brings key decision-makers together to coordinate planning and funding for the region’s transportation system.

How was the TPB created?

The TPB was created in 1965 by the region’s local and state governments to respond to federal highway legislation in 1962 that required the establishment of a “continuing, comprehensive and coordinated” transportation planning process in every urbanized area in the United States. Federal highway and transit legislation required the establishment of planning bodies, which later became known as **Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)**, when it became clear that the construction of major transportation projects through and around urban areas needed to be coordinated with local and state jurisdictions.

The TPB is today one of the 385 MPOs across America. According to federal law, an MPO must be designated in every urbanized area with a population over 50,000. The TPB is designated as this region’s MPO by the governors of Virginia and Maryland and the mayor of Washington based upon an agreement among the local governments.

What is the TPB’s relationship with COG?

The TPB became associated with the **Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)** in 1966. COG was established in 1957 by local cities and counties to deal with regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety—as well as transportation. Although the TPB is an independent body, its staff is provided by COG’s Department of Transportation Planning.



What geographic area does the TPB's planning process cover?

The TPB's planning area covers the District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions. In Maryland these jurisdictions include Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County, plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville, and Takoma Park. In Virginia, the planning area includes Alexandria, Arlington County, the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Loudoun County, Manassas, Manassas Park and Prince William County.

Who are the TPB's members?

The TPB's membership is comprised of the key transportation decision-makers in the metropolitan Washington region. The board includes local officials—mayors, city council members, county board members and others—as well as representatives from the state transportation agencies, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the state legislatures. The TPB also includes non-voting representatives from key federal agencies, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and the TPB's Private Providers Task Force.

What are the TPB's major roles?

The TPB does not exercise direct control over funding and is not responsible for construction or maintenance of the transportation system, but it does perform a range of activities that promote an integrated approach to transportation development. The federal requirements compel the key transportation players in the region to work through the TPB process.

The TPB exercises its basic role as a coordinating agency in several ways:

1. THE TPB ENSURES COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS AND REQUIREMENTS.

Federal requirements inject consistency and coordination into regional transportation decision-making. The federally mandated metropolitan planning process requires all MPOs across the country to produce two basic documents—a long-range plan, which in the Washington region is called the **Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)**, and a **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**, which lists projects and programs that will be funded in the next six years. The CLRP uses a planning horizon of 25-30 years. In order to receive federal funding, transportation projects must be included in the CLRP and the TIP.

Federal law also requires the TPB to show that the region will have adequate funds to build the projects listed in the CLRP and TIP. The funding reflected in these two planning documents must be “reasonably expected to be available,” according to federal transportation law enacted in 1991. This financial constraint was intended to make sure the different partners in the region's transportation system are realistically planning for the future.

In addition, the TPB must make sure that the projects in its CLRP and the TIP, taken collectively, contribute to air quality improvement goals for the region. This is a requirement of the federal Clean Air Act. The TPB must also comply with federal laws, regulations and policies stipulating that regional transportation plans must not disproportionately affect low-income or minority communities in an adverse way.

2. THE TPB PROVIDES A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY FRAMEWORK AND A FORUM FOR COORDINATION.

While federal law and regulations drive much of the region's regular transportation planning activities, the TPB also serves as a forum for pro-active policy coordination. The TPB's policy framework, known as the **Vision**, is intended to guide the region's transportation investments into the 21st century.

Approved in 1998, the Vision is a long-range document laying out key goals and strategies to help the region develop the transportation system it needs to sustain economic development, environmental quality and a high quality of life. Among its goals, the Vision calls for a reduction in driving, increased transit use, and a focus on land use/transportation coordination.

The Vision is not a plan with maps or lists of specific projects. It is fundamentally a framework to guide decision making. The TPB encourages various jurisdictions in the region to pursue policies and projects that contribute to specific elements of the Vision. The goals, objectives and strategies in the Vision are intended to buttress arguments for new policies and projects.

Amid the diverse needs and opinions in the region, the Vision emphasizes the commonality of our values. It is a symbol of regional consensus. Although the TPB does not directly select projects in most cases, the power of consensus reflected in the Vision can affect the kinds of projects that the states and other jurisdictions choose to pursue. And ultimately, the TPB is responsible for approving those projects through the CLRP and the TIP.

For a complete copy of the Vision, go to www.mwcog.org/transportation.

The TPB Vision Policy Goals

1. The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will provide reasonable access at reasonable cost to everyone in the region.
2. The Washington metropolitan region will develop, implement, and maintain an interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy throughout the entire region, including a healthy regional core and dynamic regional activity centers with a mix of jobs, housing, services and recreation in a walkable environment.
3. The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will give priority to management, performance, maintenance, and safety of all modes and facilities.
4. The Washington metropolitan region will use the best available technology to maximize system effectiveness.
5. The Washington metropolitan region will plan and develop a transportation system that enhances and protects the region's natural environmental quality, cultural and historic resources, and communities.
6. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve better inter-jurisdictional coordination of transportation and land use planning.
7. The Washington metropolitan region will achieve enhanced funding mechanisms for regional and local transportation system priorities that cannot be implemented with current and forecasted federal, state, and local funding.
8. The Washington metropolitan region will support options for international and inter-regional travel and commerce.

3. THE TPB PROVIDES TECHNICAL RESOURCES FOR DECISION-MAKING.

Finally, the TPB is a technical resource. The TPB staff is continually working in close coordination with the staffs from the local and state jurisdictions and WMATA, as well as with outside consultants, to produce numerous studies and analyses.

TPB MEMBERS
City of Alexandria
Arlington County
City of Bowie
Charles County
City of College Park
District of Columbia
City of Fairfax
Fairfax County
City of Falls Church
City of Frederick
Frederick County
City of Gaithersburg
City of Greenbelt
Loudoun County
City of Manassas
City of Manassas Park
Montgomery County
Prince George’s County
Prince William County
City of Rockville
City of Takoma Park
Maryland House of Delegates
Maryland Senate
Virginia House of Delegates
Virginia Senate
Maryland DOT
Virginia DOT
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration
National Capital Planning Commission
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
National Park Service
Private Providers Task Force

This technical information is essential for the decisions made by the TPB itself and for the decisions of the jurisdictions in the region.

Technical information and analysis are prepared on a variety of topics. Travel monitoring activities gather information on current travel patterns and conditions. TPB staff collects data on transportation facilities throughout the region to assess the performance of highway and transit facilities. They calculate congestion levels based upon measures of the average number of cars per lane-mile of highway. Staff also conducts periodic surveys to determine how people are traveling, for what purpose, and how far.

Travel forecasting develops predictions about future travel conditions. The TPB staff develops these forecasts using computer programs (“models”) whose inputs include assumptions about the future, including projected population and job growth, data about planned or potential improvements in the transportation system, and assumptions about future travel demand. The model’s outputs produce travel forecasts that inform a variety of decisions, such as helping to determine how various transportation investments will affect mobility in the region.

Information about current and future travel conditions is used for a number of purposes—especially for the regional air quality analysis required by the federal Clean Air Act of 1990. Technical data produced by the TPB staff are also used by other jurisdictions and agencies. The states, the District of Columbia and WMATA (the regional transit authority) use TPB data on a regular basis to plan and operate their services and facilities.

How Are Projects Developed?

Let's take a step back and ask how transportation improvements are selected and developed before they are submitted to the TPB for inclusion in the region's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The TPB's regional policies and federal metropolitan planning requirements influence the types of projects that are developed and submitted by the states. However, project development typically occurs at the state and local levels.

The District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia each controls its own funding stream and each has its own system for moving projects forward. Within each state, projects may be pursued for a variety of reasons and may have multiple sponsors.

Project development can be unpredictable. Projects sometimes get put on a fast track when elected officials or a group of

citizens take a special interest in them. Some projects move forward when they are selected as preferred alternatives in studies. But in other cases, projects are delayed or dropped because funding is unavailable, because other alternatives emerge, or simply because they are controversial. Sometimes transportation improvements are listed for years in local comprehensive plans or state plans before any action is taken to get them funded.

Here are some of the ways that projects are identified, planned and programmed:

Identifying Needs

New transportation projects can arise from simple citizen suggestions or from years of complicated technical analysis. A variety of plans, studies and other mechanisms are used to identify and prioritize project needs throughout the region.

These are some basic ways in which needs and solutions are identified:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANS

Transportation projects are often first identified through local planning, which is performed by county or municipal governments. Local comprehensive plans usually include a transportation element (see page 10) identifying specific projects that a local government has determined will be needed over the period of the comprehensive plan—usually 20-25 years.



PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

The state DOTs each have methods for identifying projects needed to maintain the integrity of the transportation system, enhance safety or improve mobility or accessibility. The states usually give highest priority to maintenance needs and structural deficiencies. Project recommendations are often based upon the state's regular technical analysis of pavements, bridges, congestion levels or safety issues. The states propose other projects that are system "enhancements" including trails or landscaping, or projects to serve air quality improvement goals, such as park-and-ride lots or ridesharing programs. In other cases, the states recommend "new capacity"—new or widened roads, or transit extensions. However, new capacity has become less frequent as the region's transportation system matures and funding tightens.

TRANSIT PLANS AND STUDIES

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) regularly assesses the needs of the Metro system, and identifies new projects. Like the state DOTs, WMATA places a priority on system preservation, including replacement of rail cars and buses, escalator and elevator repair and track maintenance. WMATA also studies and identifies system enhancements, such as bus service improvements. The Maryland Transit Administration, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, DDOT and local transit agencies also perform their own studies, in addition to working with WMATA.

CORRIDOR AND SUB-AREA STUDIES

Major projects go through studies that look at a variety of transportation alternatives for particular "transportation corridors" or

specific areas of the region. State agencies generally perform these studies, in cooperation with the TPB and in accordance with federal procedures. Corridors recently under study include the I-66 Corridor in Virginia, the I-270 Corridor in Maryland and the Capital Beltway.

NEEDS IDENTIFICATION AT THE TPB

At the regional level, the TPB helps identify problems and needs by monitoring current travel conditions and forecasting future travel demand. The TPB's freeway monitoring program, for example, in 2005 identified the region's top ten most congested highway segments.

The TPB is also studying how travel might be affected if we changed current land use plans and transportation investments. The Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study has been looking at a number of alternative visions of the future that ask various "what if" questions: What if we shortened commutes by moving jobs and households closer together? What if we gave commuters more travel options — more trains and buses, more walkable communities? What if we added express toll lanes? Analysis of such questions is designed to influence decision making at the local and state levels by identifying opportunities for maximizing access while reducing congestion.

Long-Range Planning

Each state has a long-range planning process that brings together project recommendations from local governments, the state DOTs, WMATA and other sources. A project does not have to appear in a state long-range plan in order to receive funding. However, the priorities established in these state plans often determine which projects get built.

What About Small or Minor Projects?

So-called minor improvement projects—like side streets, sidewalks and bus stops—can have a major impact on people’s lives. These types of projects do not typically have to go through the official state and regional planning and programming processes.

If you want to push for a small transportation improvement in your community, you should get in touch with a local member of your city or county council, or join forces with a neighborhood organization that is also interested in the project. You might also want to directly contact the departments of transportation or public works in your city or county to find out who would have responsibility for the project and how it might be implemented. A listing of these departments is provided on pages 38-40 of this guide.

VIRGINIA

Virginia has a number of long-range planning efforts that serve as the basis for project development. A 20-year statewide transportation plan, called VTrans2025, provides policy guidance for all transportation modes. The VTrans2025 final report, which was approved in 2005, identified 21 policy recommendations in the areas of funding and investment, land use, connectivity, priority setting, and sustaining the VTrans2025 vision.

VDOT also developed a 2025 State Highway Plan that recommends specific road improvements for the next 20 years. VDOT has launched a prioritization process for the Highway Plan that uses a quantitative methodology to rank projects and recommend priorities for short-term funding (See information on the Six-Year Improvement Program on pages 27-28.)

Finally, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) has its own long-range transportation plan. The most recent version of this plan, called TransAction 2030, was adopted in 2005. TransAction 2030 contains an ambitious multimodal list of projects, which are prioritized within eight transportation

corridors. The plan identified more than \$15 billion in unfunded needs.

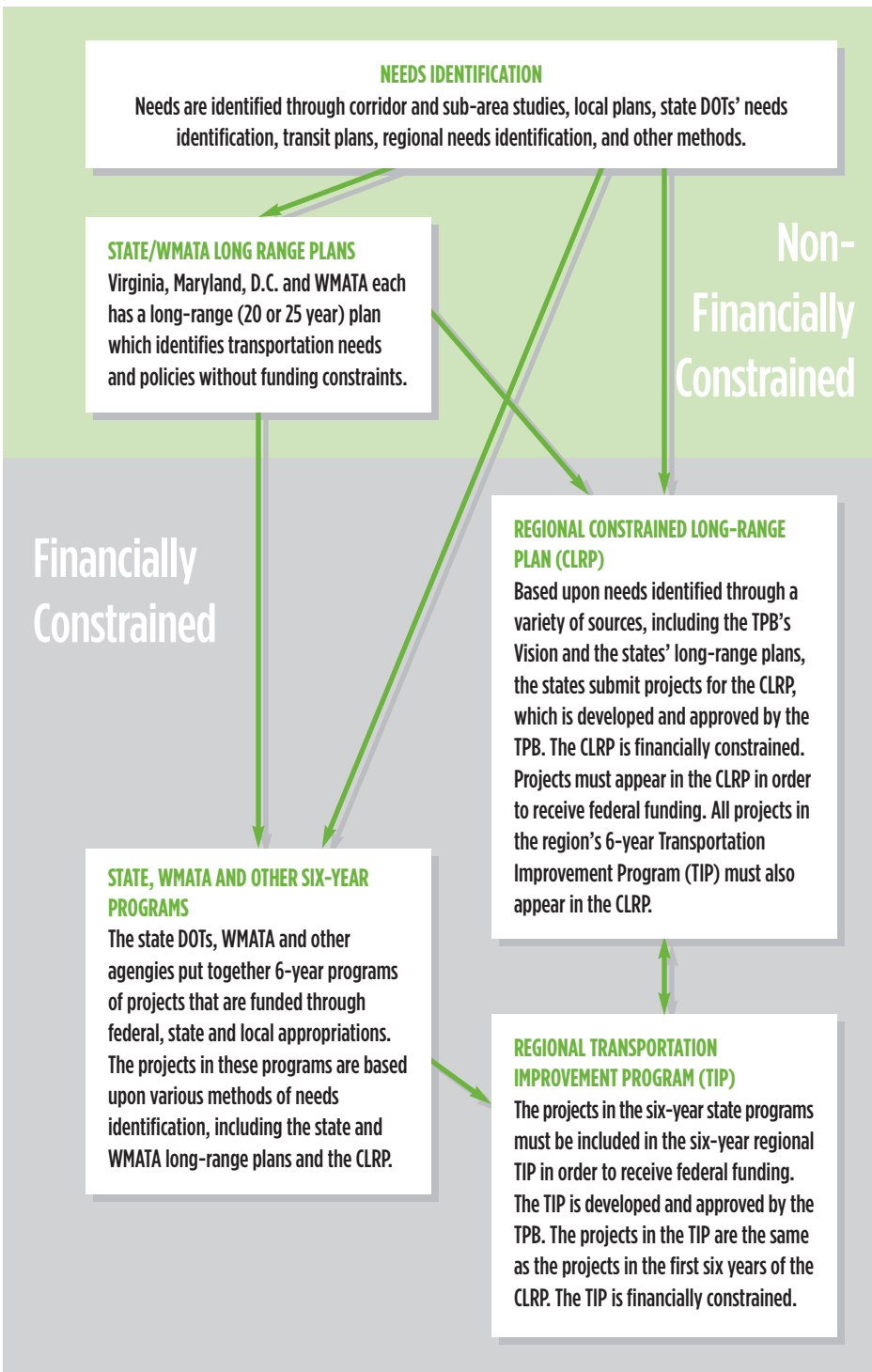
The priorities in TransAction 2030, together with VTrans2025 and the State Highway Plan, serve as the basis for Virginia’s project submissions for the TPB’s Constrained Long-Range Plan.

MARYLAND

The Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) establishes policy goals for state transportation services and infrastructure over the next 20 years. The MTP is a starting point for the development of strategic plans, programs and projects by MDOT’s different agencies. The 2004 MTP laid out eight broad policy goals and specified some of MDOT’s key project priorities, such as the InterCounty Connector, an express toll road between Laurel and Gaithersburg.

Every year, MDOT submits the MTP to the General Assembly, along with the six-year Consolidated Transportation Program (described on pages 26-26), as part of the governor’s transportation funding request. MDOT also submits the Annual Attainment Report, which tracks the achievement of the MTP’s goals and objectives.

Stages in Project Identification, Planning and Programming



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Transportation Plan. The last plan was approved in 1997. The new plan, which has a horizon year of 2030, maintains the prior plan's transit recommendations with an emphasis on surface transit, including light rail. In addition, it focuses on maximizing travel efficiency, safety, and public space quality in major transportation corridors.

The new D.C. Comprehensive Plan (the District's land use plan), which is the responsibility of the Office of Planning, promotes policies to support an increase in the District's population. Accommodating additional travel demands will be a key element of the new Strategic Transportation Plan.

WMATA

WMATA's 25-year Transit Service Expansion Plan, approved in 1999, proposed an ambitious long-term program of projects, including new rail lines and expanded bus service. Because WMATA does not have a funding source that it alone controls, the recommendations of the Expansion Plan were intended to guide the decisions made by WMATA's funding partners—the states, local governments and the federal government.

In 2002, the WMATA Board adopted a 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) intended to guide long-term capital investments for rehabilitating the bus and rail systems, and addressing ridership and capacity needs. This 10-year plan supported WMATA's campaign for new capital funding that resulted in the 2005 Metro Matters funding agreement. WMATA expects to update the 10-year plan in 2008.

What are we constraining?

QUESTION: The “C” in CLRP stands for “constrained.” Just what does that mean?

ANSWER: The CLRP is financially constrained. It only includes projects that the region can afford to build with existing revenues or with revenues that can be reasonably expected to be available.

THE TPB'S CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE PLAN (CLRP)

Unlike the long-range plans of the states and WMATA, the TPB's long-range plan is not a list of unfunded projects. That's why it's known as the *Constrained* Long-Range Plan (CLRP).

The CLRP is a comprehensive plan of transportation projects and strategies that the TPB realistically anticipates can be implemented over the next 25 to 30 years. The TPB typically amends the CLRP every year, along with developing a new Transportation Improvement Program or TIP (see pages 30-32). A new air quality conformity determination (described on page 24) must be made when the CLRP is amended and the TIP is approved.

Putting together the CLRP is a defining task for the TPB. It is the document that the TPB uses to meet a number of major federal requirements. The CLRP is also a primary vehicle for implementing the TPB Vision, the region's transportation policy framework.

Every year, Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and WMATA submit lists of projects for the TPB to include in the draft CLRP. Federal requirements and TPB policies influence the types of projects that the states and D.C. choose to pursue.

Air Quality Planning in The Washington Region

The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) is the entity certified, under the federal Clean Air Act, to prepare an air quality plan (called a State Implementation Plan or SIP) for the Washington region. MWAQC is certified by the mayor of Washington and the governors of Maryland and Virginia. It includes local elected officials, representatives of the state and D.C. air management and transportation agencies, state legislators and the chair of the TPB. Like the TPB, MWAQC is housed at the Council of Governments (COG), which provides its staff.

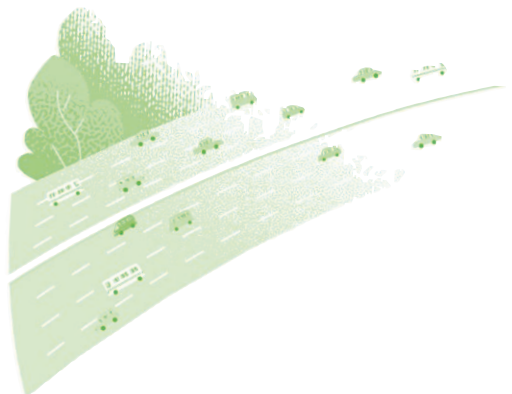
Transportation is integral to air quality planning. The regional air quality plan includes a ceiling (“an emissions budget”) for emissions from mobile sources (vehicles), as well as emissions reduction requirements for other sources of air pollution, such as power plants. The TPB must show that its transportation plans will conform to the mobile source emissions ceilings for specific milestone years established in the regional air quality plan.

In developing the CLRP, the TPB looks for consistency between the planned transportation system and the following objectives:

- **The CLRP must include only those projects the region can afford.** The “C” in CLRP refers to *financial constraint*. The plan may only include projects that the region can afford to build, operate and maintain. It is not a “wish list” or a “needs plan.”

This financial constraint was originally a requirement of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, a landmark federal law that gave new powers to all Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the country, including the TPB. Financial realism was an important means of empowering MPOs because it forced all the key players to make tough decisions as part of the regional long-range planning process.

- **The CLRP must conform to air quality improvement goals.** Like financial constraint, “air quality conformity” is a federal requirement. TPB staff tests the draft CLRP to ensure that the projects in the plan, when considered collectively, contribute to the air quality improvement goals embodied in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Staff performs a series of tests with computer models that predict air pollution levels over the next 25 years. Once the TPB finds that the CLRP meets regional air quality goals, federal agencies certify that the plan is “in conformity.” In other words, the TPB ensures that the CLRP “conforms” to air quality improvement goals.



In order to help the region meet air quality improvement goals, the TPB may adopt **Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMs)**, such as ridesharing and telecommuting programs, improved transit and bicycling facilities, clean fuel vehicle programs or other actions.

- **The CLRP must not have disproportionately high and adverse effects on low-income, minority, and disabled populations.** According to Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as subsequent federal directives, federal programs may not discriminate against minority groups, low-income populations or disabled people. Because many transportation projects are federally funded, the TPB must ensure that the transportation system planned in the CLRP does not have disproportionate

and adverse impacts on these groups. These civil rights obligations are commonly called environmental justice requirements, although they apply to broad questions regarding the benefits and burdens of federal investments, not just environmental impacts.

The TPB addresses federal environmental justice concerns in a variety of ways. TPB staff conducts technical studies to measure the ways in which the transportation system of the future will serve low-income and minority people compared with the region as a whole. The TPB also conducts public outreach activities that engage minority and low-income communities in an ongoing dialogue about the impacts of transportation investments. The TPB established its Access for All Advisory Committee to make sure these concerns are heard.

Largo Metrorail Extension

Developing a Project

The Blue Line extension to Largo was not included in the Metrorail system that was initially planned in 1968, but through the efforts of citizens, local leaders and state officials, it has become a reality. As early as 1973, Prince George’s County included the project in the county’s Master Plan. The 1990 statewide Commuter Assistance Study, conducted by MDOT, made transit development in the corridor a state priority and a 1992 MDOT Alternatives Analysis recommended a Metro rail extension to Largo. In 1992, MDOT included the project in the state’s long-range plan, the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP). It subsequently was included in the region’s Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in 1994.

In the latter 1990s, MDOT and WMATA performed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which included extensive public involvement and ultimately approved an alignment for construction. In the fall of 1999, MDOT included funding for construction in the draft Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP), which was presented to county officials during MDOT’s Annual Tour (see page 26). With strong local support, additional general fund appropriations for the project were received in 2004. The project’s estimated cost of \$434 million was guaranteed through a funding agreement between the federal and state governments in 2000, when it proceeded to construction.

Six-Year Programs at the State Level

Each state has its own procedure for developing transportation programs—lists of projects to be funded in the next six years. These short-range programs are dependent upon the legislative approval of transportation budgets.

At the beginning of every calendar year, the states and other agencies submit six-year lists of projects to the TPB for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is described on pages 30-32. All these programming processes are continuously ongoing; a new cycle is getting started before the old programming cycle has even ended. These processes are summarized in the chart on page 32.

Six-year programming in the different states is described below.

MARYLAND

Every summer, the Maryland DOT develops a draft six-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

The starting point in developing the annual CTP is the previous year's program, but planners at MDOT also have to be sure the projects in the CTP reflect local needs and priorities. In the spring, MDOT asks each county and its state legislators to identify local transportation priorities and officially transmit them to the state in the form of the counties' annual "Priority Letters." Planners at MDOT compare local priorities with the previous year's CTP. They also identify systems preservation needs—such as road resurfacing projects—through technical evaluation. In determining what can and cannot be funded, MDOT planners examine the previous year's CTP to determine how costs and revenues have changed.

The draft CTP is sent to the governor for review in August and is released to the public on September 15.

During the Secretary's "Annual Tour of the Counties," Maryland DOT officials get feedback about the draft CTP from county and local officials, and from the public.

Between September and November, the Maryland secretary of transportation and other MDOT officials go on the road to get feedback on the draft CTP. In a process commonly called the "Annual Tour" (or the "Roadshow"), MDOT officials visit each county and present the draft six-year program. The Annual Tour presentations often occur as part of the county councils' regular meetings. The public is invited to make comments and ask questions at these presentations.

After considering the input received from local and county officials during the Annual Tour, MDOT revises the CTP and submits it first to the Governor and then to the General Assembly for budget approval.

The Maryland General Assembly considers and approves the six-year program.

In January the Governor annually submits the State Report on Transportation to the Maryland General Assembly. This report, consisting of the long-range MTP (see page 21) and a draft finalized version of the six-year CTP (described above), forms the basis for the governor's annual transportation funding request, which the General Assembly must approve. Maryland law does not permit the General Assembly to add projects to the governor's funding request, although the legislature may delete projects or funding. The General Assembly typically approves the CTP in April.

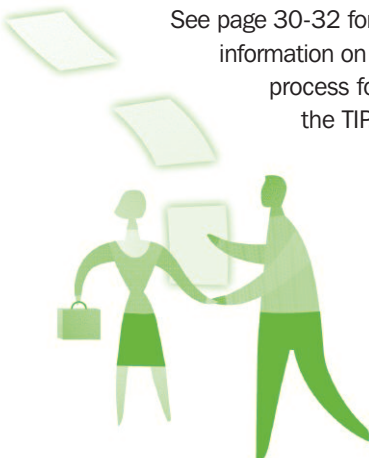
Facing growing congestion on Route 234, community leaders in Prince William County started pushing more than thirty years ago for a bypass around the central business district of Manassas. The bypass originally appeared in the county's comprehensive plan in 1978. A corridor study, initiated in 1987 by VDOT, looked at widening Route 234 between I-95 and I-66, which included the portion of the road through Manassas. During that study, county and city officials, state legislators, and citizens persuasively argued that a new bypass needed to be constructed between I-66 and the southern city limits of Manassas, in addition to widening existing Route 234 south of the city. In 1988, the bypass was included in the first subregional transportation plan for Northern Virginia (conducted before the NVTVA existed).

In 1990, the Commonwealth Transportation Board included the Manassas Bypass project (for preliminary engineering) in the state's six-year primary road plan (precursor to Six-Year Improvement Program). In 1991, it became part of the TPB's 20-year regional long-range plan (the precursor to the CLRP) and six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In 1994, the project received funding for final design and right-of-way purchase. Estimated at approximately \$150 million, the project's construction began in 1995 and was completed in 2001.

Maryland submits projects to the TPB for the Washington region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in two stages.

- In January, using the draft finalized CTP, MDOT submits a list of projects for inclusion in the air quality analysis that the TPB is required to perform under federal law.
- In April, the MDOT submits detailed and final project information for the TIP.

See page 30-32 for more information on the TPB's process for developing the TIP.



VIRGINIA

Every fall, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) conducts public information meetings before developing their Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

The CTB allocates funds to projects in accordance with state law and guides the work of the Virginia DOT, much like a board of directors. The CTB conducts public meetings in each of VDOT's nine districts, including Northern Virginia. At these fall forums, VDOT presents the public with a list of potential projects—and anticipated costs—that might be included in the new SYIP. This list of candidate projects typically includes projects that have already started, projects that were delayed in previous years, and projects that are deemed to be local or regional priorities.

In the winter, the CTB provides initial Interstate and Primary System (Routes numbered 600 and less) priorities for the draft SYIP.

Working with the staff of VDOT, the CTB develops a draft SYIP based upon public feedback, projected funding available (federal and state) and needs identified through technical analysis. At this point in the process, the draft SYIP is reconciled in broad terms to anticipated revenues and costs.

The SYIP allocates money for transportation studies and projects that are proposed for implementation (including engineering and right-of-way acquisition) and construction in the next six fiscal years. In developing the SYIP, the CTB considers the priorities identified by VDOT from the State Highway Plan (see page 21), as well as needs identified in VTrans 2025. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's "TransAction 2030" long range plan recommendations may also be considered.

Every two years in the spring, the General Assembly approves funding for transportation in a two-year Appropriation Act.

The Virginia General Assembly approves the transportation budget through the two-year (biennial) Appropriation Act, which contains all statewide funding. This legislation is approved every two years, usually in April. After the first year of the biennial budget cycle is completed, the General Assembly has an opportunity to amend the budget.

The Appropriation Act generally allocates funding for broad transportation categories, not for individual projects. The revenues in

the Appropriations Act are largely based upon estimates provided in the Governor's Budget Bill. The estimates for transportation revenues in the Budget Bill are prepared by the Department of Taxation and the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Based on the budget framework provided by the General Assembly, VDOT staff develops the final SYIP.

In late spring (usually in April and May) VDOT staff, in coordination with the CTB, develops a final draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) based upon finalized budget information. Funding for the first two years of the SYIP is based upon the two-year Appropriation Act approved by the General Assembly. The funds for the remaining four years of the SYIP are based upon revenue forecasts.

A draft SYIP is released for public comment in April/May. According to Virginia law, the CTB must approve a final SYIP by June 30 since the Commonwealth's fiscal year begins on July 1.

Virginia submits projects to the TPB for the Washington region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in two stages.

- In January, using a draft version of the SYIP, Virginia submits a list of projects for inclusion in the air quality analysis that the TPB is required to perform under federal law.
- In April, the VDOT submits detailed and final project information for the TIP.

See pages 30-32 for more information on the TPB's process for developing the TIP.

The idea for a pedestrian and bicycle trail along the Red Line from Union Station to Takoma Park dates back to 1988 when a group of citizens formed the Coalition for the Metropolitan Branch Trail. In 1991, the D.C. Council passed a resolution officially endorsing the trail. A 1996 study, conducted by the District, verified the feasibility of the project, which was incorporated into the District's long-range transportation plan in 1997. The federal transportation legislation (TEA-21) of 1998 included \$8.5 million in special funding for the trail. Subsequently, the District placed the project in its annual capital budget and the regional TIP and CLRP, along with another \$8 million in federal and local money. The TPB's report "Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Greenways" identified the project as a regional priority.

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has used a portion of this funding to design and construct the trail around the New York Avenue Metro station, as well as to acquire the necessary land near the station. In addition to the monthly Coalition meetings, advocates and District staff meet frequently with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and other stakeholders to address issues and generate support for the project. When completed, the trail will provide transportation, recreation and economic development opportunities for underserved sections of the city.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Every fall, the District DOT assembles a draft six-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

D.C.'s fiscal year, like the federal government's, begins in October (unlike Maryland and Virginia whose fiscal years begin in July). In October, DDOT begins to develop its draft TIP based upon a call for new projects, and a review and update of commitments in the previous year's TIP. New projects are recommended from a variety of sources, including businesses, citizens and neighborhoods. Projects also originate through the District government itself, including the DC Council, the Economic Development Office of the mayor, and the planners who work in the eight wards of the city. DDOT uses a number of systematic methods to identify needs, including community outreach forums, safety and asset management systems, and targeted outreach to stakeholder groups, such as the Business Improvement Districts.

At the beginning of every year, the city administrator and then the mayor review and approve the draft D.C. TIP.

In January, the city administrator reviews proposed capital and operating budgets for the District government, including the TIP, and then passes the budgets on to the mayor. After further review and revision, the mayor submits the six-year TIP to the D.C. Council, usually in March. The D.C. TIP includes both locally and federally funded capital projects.

In April, the D.C. Council convenes a Committee of the Whole Public Briefing to review the mayor's fiscal year proposed budget and financial plan, which includes the six-year TIP.

The D.C. Council holds this hearing as a public hearing to review the draft TIP, which it can amend.

In late spring or early summer, the D.C. Council approves the D.C. TIP.

The Council, acting as a state legislature, must approve the TIP as part of the District budget. But unlike the states, the District of Columbia must go through one more step in developing its six-year transportation program—Congressional approval.

At the end of summer, the U.S. Congress enacts the D.C. budget.

The District presents its capital budget, including the six-year TIP, to Congress for approval every summer. After a review process, Congress enacts the District's budget as part of the federal appropriations process.

D.C. submits projects to the TPB for the Washington region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in two stages.

- In January, using a draft version of the D.C. TIP, DDOT submits a list of projects for inclusion in the air quality analysis that the TPB is required to perform under federal law.
- In April, DDOT submits detailed and final project information for the regional TIP.

See below for more information on the TPB's process for developing the region's TIP.

WMATA

WMATA's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year program that identifies the funding required for capital projects to rehabilitate the bus and rail system, address ridership and capacity needs, and expand the system. WMATA develops this CIP with the input of the agency's member jurisdictions. Projects in the CIP use funding from the federal government, and from state and local jurisdictions.

Every year, as part of the annual budget process, WMATA's general manager submits a proposed six-year CIP to the WMATA Board of Directors. After approval, the projects in this CIP are then submitted for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which are approved by the TPB. (See pages 30-32 for more information on the TIP).

OTHER PROJECT PROGRAMMING

Other agencies, such as the *National Park Service*, and some *counties*, *cities* and *towns* develop projects using federal funds outside the state or WMATA programming processes.

Regardless of what programming process they go through, all regionally significant projects must be submitted to the TPB for inclusion in the regional TIP and CLRP.

THE TPB'S TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes all the regionally significant projects that the region's states and other jurisdictions have programmed and approved for the next six years. Like the CLRP, the TIP is subject to federal review and must meet air quality conformity requirements.

Many of the projects in the TIP are staged over several years. For example, a highway improvement project typically consists of a planning phase, an engineering phase, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Each of these phases may last three or more years. While the entire project is described in the CLRP, in many instances only a portion of these activities is programmed in the six-year TIP.

The TIP is usually updated each year. Preparatory work on the TIP begins in the fall. Final approval is scheduled for July.

Each TIP includes many projects from earlier years, as well as new projects. Due to the time required for TPB and staff review, which includes complex air quality testing, the schedule for the TIP is tight. Every January, the DOTs, WMATA and other programming agencies submit projects for inclusion in the air quality analysis that the TPB is required to perform under federal law. In April, the agencies submit detailed and final project information for the TIP. The TPB is scheduled to approve the TIP in July.

A Few Words about Project-level Planning and Construction

Of course, the story does not end here. Completing a transportation project requires a number of phases, which can last a number of years.

The sponsoring agencies are responsible for project-level planning and analysis, and for obtaining citizen input, which helps define the projects. The role of the TPB during planning is typically to review the regional system as a whole and to evaluate how all the components work together, not to make project-level decisions.

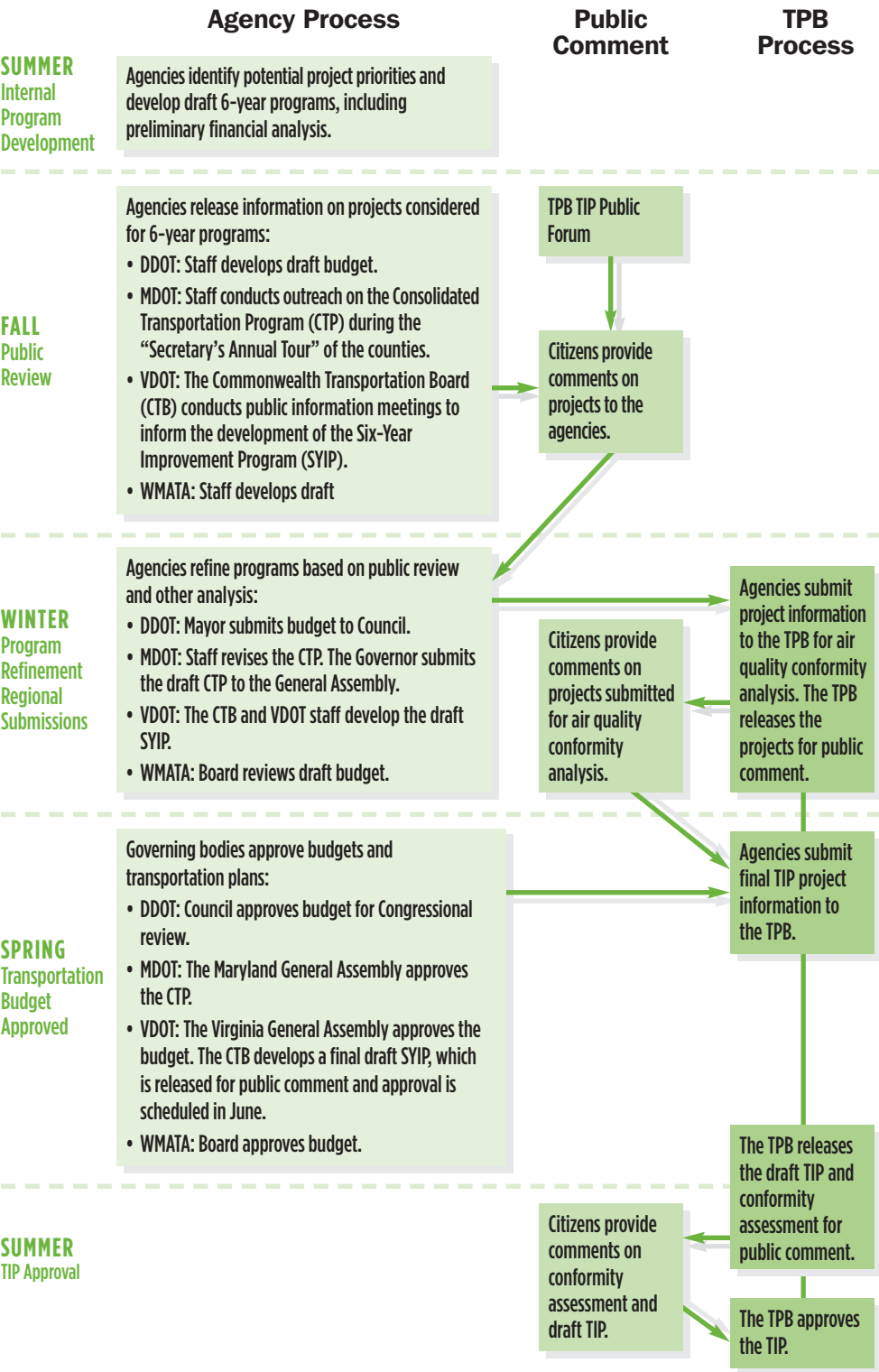
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all projects using federal dollars to have some level of environmental analysis. Some examples of the types of these analyses include Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), Environmental Assessments (EA), and Categorical Exclusions (CE). The scope of the analysis is determined at the beginning of the project.

For major projects, project sponsors are required to perform an EIS which evaluates all feasible alternatives. The study examines the costs and benefits of various alternatives, and how effectively the different options would “get the job done.” It also measures other social, economic or environmental impacts. Federal law requires adequate public involvement opportunities. The EIS process ends with a Record of Decision (ROD), the federal approval for the selected alternative that will be carried forward to the next phases of project development.

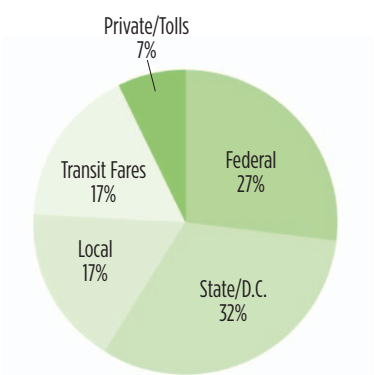
The official federal approval of a selected alternative typically concludes the project planning phase. At this point, the project enters the design phase (also called the preliminary engineering phase), which includes development of construction plans, environmental re-evaluation (if appropriate) and permit applications. This is followed by the right-of-way acquisition phase, in which project implementers purchase right-of-way. Finally, when the project is ready to be built or implemented, the project sponsors award a contract and it can proceed to the construction phase.



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) APPROVAL PROCESS

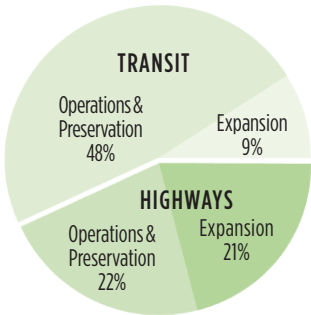


Some Questions About Transportation Funding



Long-Range Plan Revenues

\$109.8 billion (2007-2030)
(Constant Year 2007 Dollars)



Long-Range Plan Expenditures

\$109.8 billion (2007-2030)
(Constant Year 2007 Dollars)

Where does money for transportation come from?

Most of the funds for transportation projects come from user fees—gas taxes and transit fares—paid by consumers, including both private individuals and commercial vehicle owners. Federal and state funds mostly come from gasoline and diesel taxes, with some additional vehicle fees (registration fees, excise taxes, etc.) at the state level. The best known user fee is the federal motor fuel tax, currently 18.4 cents per gallon of gasoline, which is used to fund both transit and highways. Transit fares, another significant type of user fee, are used to partly pay for transit operations.

Local government transportation funding comes from property taxes and, in some cases, sales taxes. Revenues are frequently collected at one level of government and transferred to another before being expended on transportation. Private sources of funding include payments or direct construction by real estate developers or other private interests. In recent years, tolls have become an increasingly important source of revenue for new projects.

Do we have enough money for our regional needs?

Over the next 25 years, the TPB estimates the region's available transportation funding will be more than \$4.5 billion per year on average. That may sound like a lot, but at least 70 percent of those funds will be needed just to operate and maintain the system that is already in place.

That leaves an insufficient amount for major fix-ups or system expansions which will be needed in a region whose population is expected to increase 40 percent in the next 25 years. This is not just a long-term shortfall. According to a 2004 TPB analysis, the region's unfunded transportation needs over the six-year period 2005-2010 totaled \$13.2 billion.

Why is transportation funding so limited?

Money is tight for a variety of reasons. First of all, federal funding for transportation is likely to dwindle. Federal and state fuel tax revenue have declined in real terms. In addition, building new facilities is more expensive than it was in the past, largely because of rising land costs, the costs of meeting strict environmental requirements, and rising material and labor costs.

In part, today's funding challenge is the price of yesterday's successful construction programs. Our major facilities are aging and need upkeep. Older transit and highway systems cost more to maintain, just as older homes and cars do. Maintenance and enhancement of these regional systems is a continuing challenge.

Finally, unlike other metropolitan regions that have designated sales or gasoline taxes specifically for transportation, the Washington region is unusual in that it has no dedicated regional sources of funding for regional transportation improvements. In fact, WMATA is the only large transit agency in the country without a dedicated revenue source. This lack of predictable funding makes the region reliant upon year-to-year decisions by Congress, the state governments, and local jurisdictions to provide for its transportation needs.



Some Non-Technical Answers To Technical Questions

How does the TPB predict travel patterns 25 years from now?

Using complex computer programs (“models”), TPB staff estimates how the transportation system planned for the next 25 years will affect travel in the region. This process, which is called travel demand modeling, uses data inputs including forecasts of job and population growth, and engineering assumptions about the ability of roads and transit to handle anticipated travel. For example, a model can estimate how much a newly widened highway, changes in transit fares or shifted land-use patterns will affect congestion levels—both on the affected corridor and throughout the region.

How does the TPB predict vehicle emissions levels 25 years from now?

Like travel demand, future emissions levels are estimated using computer programs (“models”). Travel demand modeling (described above) is used to estimate travel patterns and congestion levels that will result from the 25-year transportation system laid out in the TPB’s Constrained Long-Range Plan. Using that data, an air quality model estimates the amount of emissions from motor vehicles, measured in tons per day that will be produced in future years. Air quality models incorporate a number of

factors including the number and types of vehicles that will be on the road, the speeds at which they will travel, and the effects of technological improvements in vehicles and fuels.

How does COG forecast employment, population and households?

The Cooperative Forecasting Program at the Council of Governments (COG) uses common assumptions about future growth and development, including local land-use plans, to forecast jobs, households, and population. The program combines regional data, which are based upon national economic trends and regional demographics, with local projections of population, households and employment. These local projections are based on data about real estate development, market conditions, adopted land-use plans and planned transportation improvements. The Cooperative Forecasting Program is used extensively by the TPB staff in modeling travel demand and emissions.

How Can You Get Involved?

Make your voice heard! There are many ways for citizens to become better informed and more involved. Here are some of the possibilities:

- **Get informed.** Follow transportation issues in the media. Search the internet for information about projects and plans. Have your name placed on mailing or e-mail lists to receive newsletters or regular updates.
- **Get out there.** Attend public meetings on projects or plans. These sessions are often advertised in local papers or posted on the internet by local or state agencies.
- **Talk with decision makers.** Contact elected officials or the staff at transportation agencies to request information about projects or plans. Find out how citizens can get involved.
- **Work with your neighbors.** Contact your neighborhood or civic association to see if their members are interested in a particular transportation issue and if they plan to take any action.
- **Join a group.** Join an organized group that is promoting a specific transportation project or is advocating broad policy changes regarding transportation investments in your community or across the region.
- **Volunteer to serve.** Participate in an ad hoc advisory group for a local or regional

transportation study. Or volunteer to serve as a member of a standing citizens committee, such as the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

- **Express yourself for the record.** Citizens have the opportunity to make statements and provide testimony at a number of venues, including formal public hearings and information-sharing meetings on projects and plans. In addition, most local governments and planning commissions, including the TPB, have public comment periods on their agendas.

The TPB has a public comment period at the beginning of each board meeting. TPB meetings begin at 12 noon on the third Wednesday of each month (except August). To sign up, call (202) 962-3315. The TPB website is www.mwcog.org/transportation.

- **Put it in writing.** Send a letter or submit a written statement to key decision makers. The addresses for key agencies are listed at the back of this guide.

You can submit a written statement to the TPB through our website at www.mwcog.org.

You may also send your message by e-mail to TPBPublicComment@mwccog.org or by regular mail. Letters are made available to all TPB members and become part of the permanent record.

The TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

The **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** is the main standing body for providing citizen input into the deliberations of the Transportation Planning Board. The TPB established the CAC in 1993, partly in response to the citizen involvement requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. According to the TPB's Participation Plan, the CAC's mission statement calls upon the committee to promote public involvement in regional transportation planning and provide independent, region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB.

The CAC has 15 members, five each from Northern Virginia, suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia. The CAC meets every month, six days before the TPB's monthly meeting, to review many of the same substantive issues that will be on the TPB agenda. The CAC chair gives a report at the TPB meeting the following week.

Over the years, the CAC has focused on key regional transportation issues, such as the transportation funding shortfall or environmental concerns, and has offered comments to the TPB reflecting the diverse viewpoints represented on the committee. In recent years, the CAC has encouraged regional decision makers to improve the coordination between transportation and land-use planning. The CAC has also urged the TPB to develop more user-friendly public information and outreach activities.

The committee assists with TPB outreach meetings held throughout the year in locations ranging from Anacostia to Manassas.

For more information about the CAC, contact TPB staff at (202) 962-3237.

The TPB Access for All Advisory Committee

The **Access for All Advisory Committee** advises the TPB on transportation issues that are important to low-income and minority communities, and people with disabilities. It includes more than 20 representatives of interest groups from throughout the region. A member of the TPB chairs the committee.

Since its founding in 2001, the Access for All Advisory Committee has raised concerns that may not get adequate attention in other transportation planning efforts. For example, the committee has worked to promote better transit information for populations with limited English skills. More recently, the group has focused on the concerns of people with disabilities and has made recommendations regarding their access to transportation services. The committee has also sought to raise awareness about transit-oriented development and gentrification, pedestrian and bike safety, and the need for adequate funding for local bus services on which low-income people are particularly dependent. The committee provides comments on the annual update to the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan.

The Access for All Committee meets every other month, with additional subcommittee meetings throughout the year. The TPB appoints committee members.

If you are interested in the Access for All Advisory Committee, contact TPB staff at (202) 962-3321.

Key Agencies and Offices Involved in Regional Transportation Planning

Listings reflect the membership of the Transportation Planning Board and the TPB Technical Committee

REGIONAL

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC)
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290
Telephone: (202) 962-3315
Fax: (202) 962-3202
www.mwcog.org

Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA)

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2693
Telephone: (202) 962-1234
Fax: (202) 962-1409
www.wmata.com

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

401 9th Street, NW
Suite 500 North
Washington, DC 20004
Telephone: (202) 482-7200
Fax: (202) 482-7272
www.info@ncpc.gov

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

1 Aviation Circle
Washington, DC 20001-6000
Telephone: (703) 417-8600
Fax: (703) 417-8371
www.mwaa.com

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT)

2000 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009-2189
Telephone: (202) 673-6813
Fax: (202) 671-0650
www.dc.gov

Council of the District of Columbia

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
Telephone: (202) 724-8000
Fax: (202) 347-3070
www.dccouncil.us

District of Columbia Office of Planning

801 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002
Telephone: (202) 442-7600
Fax: (202) 442-7638
www.planning.dc.gov

MARYLAND

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076
Telephone: (410) 865-1142
Fax: (410) 865-1338
www.marylandtransportation.com

City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, MD 20715-2599
Telephone: (301) 262-6200
Fax: (301) 809-2302
www.cityofbowie.org

Charles County

PO Box 2150
La Plata, MD 20646
Telephone: (301) 645-0550
Fax: (301) 645-0560
www.charlescounty.org

City of College Park

4500 Knox Road
College Park, MD 20740-3390
Telephone: (301) 864-8666
Fax: (301) 699-8029
www.collegeparkmd.gov

City of Gaithersburg

31 S. Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2098
Telephone: (301) 258-6300
Fax: (301) 948-6149
www.gaithersburgmd.gov

City of Frederick

101 N. Court Street
City of Frederick, MD 21701
Telephone: (301) 600-1440
Fax: (301) 600-1381
www.cityoffrederick.com

Frederick County Offices

Winchester Hall
12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701-5447
Telephone: (301) 694-9000
Fax: (301) 694-1849

www.co.frederick.md.us

Montgomery County Council

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850-2540
Telephone: (240) 777-7900
Fax: (240) 777-7989

www.montgomerycountymd.gov

**Montgomery County Department of
Public Works and Transportation**

101 Monroe Street
10th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850-2540
Telephone: (240) 777-7170
Fax: (240) 777-7178

www.montgomerycountymd.gov

**Maryland–National Capital Park and
Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)**

Montgomery County Regional Office
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760
Telephone: (301) 495-4500
Fax: (301) 495-1310

www.mc-mncppc.org

Prince George's County Council

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3050
Telephone: (301) 952-3700
Fax: (301) 952-3238

www.co.pg.md.us

**Prince George's County Department of
Public Works and Transportation**

Inglewood Center 3
9400 Peppercorn Place
Suite 300
Largo, MD 20774-5359
Telephone: (301) 883-5600
Fax: (301) 883-5709

www.co.pg.md.us

**Maryland–National Capital Park and
Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)**

Prince George's County Regional Office
14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3090
Telephone: (301) 952-3595
Fax: (301) 952-5804

www.mncppc.org/pgco/

City of Rockville

111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850-2364
Telephone: (240) 314-5000
Fax: (240) 314-8130

www.rockvillemd.gov

City of Takoma Park

7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912-4998
Telephone: (301) 891-7100
Fax: (301) 270-8794

www.takomaparkmd.gov

Maryland House of Delegates

Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
1-800-492-7122

www.mlis.state.md.us

Maryland Senate

Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
1-800-492-7122

www.mlis.state.md.us

VIRGINIA**Virginia Department of Transportation
(VDOT)**

Northern Virginia District
Avion Lakeside I
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, Virginia 20151-1104
Telephone: (703) 383-8368
Fax: (703) 383-2230

www.virginiaidot.org

**Northern Virginia Transportation
Authority**

4031 University Drive
Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030
Telephone: (703) 766-4650
Fax: (703) 766-4654

www.thenovaauthority.org

**Northern Virginia Transportation
Commission**

4350 N. Fairfax Drive
Suite 720
Arlington, VA 22203-1621
Telephone (703) 524-3322
Fax: (703) 524-1756

www.thinkoutsidethecar.org

**Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission (PRTC)**

14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192
Telephone: (703) 730-OMNI or
(888) 730-OMNI
Fax: (703) 583-1377

www.prtctransit.org

Key Agencies and Offices, continued

City of Alexandria

City Hall
P.O. Box 178
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3211
Telephone: (703) 838-4000
Fax: (703) 519-3356
www.alexandriava.gov

Arlington County

2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201-5444
(703) 228-3000
www.co.arlington.va.us

City of Fairfax

City Hall
10455 Armstrong Street
Fairfax, VA 22030-3630
Telephone: (703) 385-7855
Fax: (703) 385-7811
www.fairfaxva.gov

Fairfax County

12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035-0065
Telephone: (703) 324-2000
Fax: (703) 324-2010
www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Falls Church

Harry E. Wells Building
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046-3395
Telephone: (703) 248-5001
Fax: (703) 248-5146
www.fallschurchva.gov

Loudoun County

1 Harrison Street, S.E.
Leesburg, VA 20175-7000
Telephone: (703) 771-5665
Fax: (703) 737-8513
www.loudoun.gov

City of Manassas

9027 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
Telephone: (703) 257-8200
Fax: (703) 335-0042
www.manassascity.org

City of Manassas Park

One Park Center
Manassas Park, VA 20111-2395
Telephone: (703) 335-8800
Fax: (703) 335-0053
www.cityofmanassaspark.us

Prince William County

One County Complex Court
Prince William, VA 22192-9201
Telephone: (703) 792-4660
Fax: (703) 792-7159
www.pwcgov.org

Senate of Virginia

P.O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218
Telephone: (804) 698-7400 (clerk's office)
<http://legis.state.va.us>

Virginia House of Delegates

General Assembly Building
P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218
Telephone: (804) 698-1500 (Information Office)
<http://legis.state.va.us>

FEDERAL

Federal Highway Administration

D.C. Division Office
1990 K Street, NW
Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006-1103
Telephone: (202) 219-3536
Fax: (202) 219-3545
www.fhwa.dot.gov

Federal Transit Administration

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Office
1990 K Street, NW
Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 219-3565 /
(202) 219-3562
Fax: (202) 219-3545
www.fta.dot.gov

National Park Service

National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Dr., SW
Washington D.C. 20242
Telephone: (202) 619-7256
www.nps.gov

Transportation Alphabet Soup

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Transportation Decision-Making*

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