



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee  
**FROM:** Victoria Caudullo, TPB Transportation Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Projects recommended for funding in FY 2026 in Maryland under the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program  
**DATE:** July 2, 2025

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## SUMMARY

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

For FY 2026 in Maryland, a total of \$2,000,000 in federal TAP funding was available for TPB decision-making. The TPB's selection panel has recommended funding for two projects, totaling \$333,005.

The projects are listed below and described later in this memorandum. The TPB Steering Committee will be asked to approve the recommendation at its meeting on July 2, 2025.

Project Title	Sponsor	Recommended TAP Funding
Connect Waldorf - Leonardtown Road Corridor Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvement Feasibility Study	Charles County	\$102,000
Prince George's County Safe Routes to School – Coordinator Position	Prince George's County	\$231,005

## BACKGROUND

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

The program provides sub-allocated funding for large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB (those MPOs classified as “Transportation Management Areas”) to fund local projects. In addition to these sub-allocated funds, a portion of the TA Set-Aside funding is reserved for statewide project selection, which is conducted by the state departments of transportation.

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

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

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

## **FY 2026 SOLICITATION FOR MARYLAND**

Maryland conducts its solicitation on an annual basis. This year’s solicitation period opened on April 1 and closed on April 30, 2025. For jurisdictions in the National Capital Region, the MDOT application included a supplementary form requesting information about how proposed projects responded to the TPB’s regional priorities related to roadway safety, Activity Centers, transit station access, the National Capital Trail Network, low income areas, and multimodal transportation options.

For the portion of Maryland in the TPB’s planning area, MDOT received 2 applications representing a total of \$333,005 in requested funding.

## **PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

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

This year’s selection panel participants included:

- Brittany Voll, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Naomi Cohen-Shields, District Department of Transportation
- John Swanson, retired COG/TPB Staff – facilitator
- Janie Nham, COG/TPB Staff
- Michael Farrell, COG/TPB Staff
- Victoria Caudullo, COG/TPB Staff

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

The regional selection criteria are listed below:

- *Improve roadway safety (Max 10 points):* Does the application make a compelling case that the project will reduce fatal and serious crashes on the region's roadways? Does the project have a focus on reducing pedestrian fatalities?
- *Expand transportation options (Max 10 points):* Will the project significantly increase transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-drivers? Will the transportation benefits of the project be more than just recreational?
- *Support for Regional Activity Centers (Max 10 points):* Does the project enhance walkability and accessibility within or between the region's 141 Activity Centers? Regional Activity Centers are places where jobs and housing are concentrated and it should be easy to walk, bike, or take transit.
- *Access to high-capacity transit and, in particular, in Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs) (Max 10 points):* Does the project improve pedestrian and bicycle access in high-capacity transit station areas, and in particular, in Transit Access Focus Areas? Nearly 300 high-capacity transit stations are anticipated in the region by 2045. The TAFAs are a subset of that list. The TAFAs comprise 49 high-capacity station areas that the TPB has prioritized as opportune locations for improving pedestrian/bike access.
- *Access for low-income communities (Max 10 points):* COG staff is currently re-evaluating the Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) tool. For the time being, and for the purposes of this review and project selection process, we are referencing census tracts where the concentration of low-income individuals at 1.5 times the federal poverty level per American Community Survey (2019-2023). Panel members are asked to refer to the Regional Analysis by COG staff assessment of whether projects are in, near, or would impact these low-income areas.
- *Support the National Capital Trail Network (Max 10 pts):* The project supports connections to and completion of the National Capital Trail Network, which is a regional trail network that the TPB approved in 2020.
- *Safe access to schools (10 points):* Does the project enhance safe pedestrian/bike access to schools? (If you believe the project improves access to schools, you may still allocate points under this criterion, even if it is not specifically submitted as an SRTS project.)
- *Increased access for people with disabilities (10 points):* Does the project promote accessibility for people with disabilities?

MDOT staff member Susan Solo provided MDOT input on the two applications prior to the panel meeting. The selection panel met on June 24. To provide a basis for discussion, each panel member provided their scores in advance of the meeting. Staff developed average scores for each project and determined a “high”, “medium”, or “low” recommendation for the project overall.

## **FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The selection panel is recommending two projects for funding, totaling \$333,005. The total recommended funding falls within the TPB's suballocation. MDOT has indicated that funding not put towards the two projects for FY26 may cover increases in costs for past approved projects.

The federally required local match of at least 20% will be provided by the applicants in addition to the federal dollar amounts recommended.

### **Consistency with Regional Priorities**

The two recommended projects described below will serve many of the TPB's key regional policies. The Connect Waldorf-Leonardtown project will interact with an Activity Center, is near the planned National Capital Trail Network on US-301, and is adjacent to a low-income area.

The Prince George's County project has the potential to interact with all TPB's key regional policies, because it will fund a position that will identify safety projects across the County that likely will be near or interact with Activity Centers, low income areas, High Capacity Transit Stations (HCTs), Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs), and the National Capital Trail Network (planned and existing segments).

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

### **Maryland Project Descriptions**

- **Connect Waldorf - Leonardtown Road Corridor Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvement Feasibility Study**

*Charles County, \$102,000 (feasibility study)*

This project will complete a feasibility study to develop and analyze the 1.8 mile Leonardtown Road corridor between US-301 and St. Charles Parkway. The analysis will determine appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the corridor, identify right-of-way acquisition needs and constraints, identify improvements to intersecting streets and railroad crossings, and identify streetscape improvements to enhance safety. The project will also develop a schedule for design and construction and a cost estimate for each future project phase.

- **Prince George's County Safe Routes to School – Coordinator Position**

*Prince George's County, \$231,005 (non-infrastructure)*

This project will fund a full-time Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coordinator position for Prince George's County over a three-year period. This SRTS Coordinator will establish a Safe Routes to School Program for Prince George's County, an initiative determined necessary to improving roadway safety in the Prince George's County Vision Zero Action and Implementation Plan. The SRTS Coordinator will liaise with the MDOT SRTS program and follow the MDOT toolkit to determine actions and initiatives that best fit the needs of Prince George's County Schools, such as school program support and infrastructure coordination.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The TPB Steering Committee will be asked to approve the selection panel's recommendation at the board meeting on July 2, 2025.

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

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

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