



County of Fairfax, Virginia

Fairfax County Perspective on Regional and State Transportation Funding and Programs

Virginia Association of Counties
Transportation Steering Committee Meeting

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Overview

- Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) / Transit Funding Bill's WMATA Provisions
 - Implementation of WMATA Funding / Reforms
 - Impact on Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA) Funding
 - Impact on Fairfax County Transportation Priorities Plan (TPP)
- Smart Scale



WMATA/Transit Funding Bill – WMATA Provisions

- Funding for WMATA was a top priority for Fairfax County. However, there are concerns that the funding came largely through reallocation of existing revenues, at expense of other significant projects throughout the Northern Virginia.
- HB 1539 (Hugo)/SB 856 (Saslaw) included \$154M per year for WMATA (matched with District of Columbia and Maryland to address WMATA's state of good repair needs and deferred maintenance), as well as governance reforms:
 - \$30M in state revenues - state recordation tax (collected in Northern Virginia) currently used to pay bonds from the Northern Virginia Transportation District Fund and motor vehicle rental tax revenues.
 - \$27M transfer from Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) localities, based on WMATA formula.
 - \$75M by redirecting the existing regional transient occupancy tax (TOT) and grantor's tax.
 - \$22M by directing funds provided through the imposition of a floor on the regional gas tax



WMATA/Transit Funding Bill (continued)



- The bill also included certain reforms:
 - Restricts participation of WMATA Board alternates;
 - Withholds 35% of state funds, if Virginia operating assistance subsidy increases by more than 3% annually;
 - Requires WMATA to adopt a capital improvement program (CIP) and strategic plan;
 - Requires a Performance Annual Report on the performance and condition of WMATA;
 - Requires annual certification by NVTC of receipt of various items from WMATA.





Implementation of WMATA Funding / Reforms

- The County is working with regional partners, including those at WMATA, NVTC, and the Commonwealth, to ensure that the funds will be spent wisely and to ensure that the governance reforms included in the legislation are being undertaken.
- These include:
 - Changes to the WMATA Board
 - Changes at NVTC (new committee structure)
 - Reporting and evaluations being undertaken by NVTC
 - CTB Resolution clarifying events that would withhold funds



Impact on NVTA Funding

- NVTA's annual funding was reduced by approximately \$75M annually, plus an additional \$27.12M transfer from localities' portion of NVTA funding (\$102M total each year).
- NVTA was in the middle of the creation of its FY 2018-2023 Six Year Program
- Approximately \$2.5B in funding was requested for regional projects.
- Final Program, adopted in June, provided 1.285B over six years.
 - Program would have provided at least \$1.5B without the HB 1539/SB 856 changes.





County Transportation Priorities Plan (TPP)

- In January 2014, Fairfax County Board approved over \$1.4B in Transportation Priorities Plan (TPP), which set priorities for transportation over a six-year period (FY 2015-FY 2020). TPP included approximately 220 projects (included road widenings, bike and pedestrian improvements, transit service, etc).
- FCDOT initiated the process to update the TPP in Fall 2016.
 - Some activities included: revising revenue estimates to include revenues through FY2024; updating project costs; developing benefit-cost information for each project; adjusting project implementation timelines; and public outreach.
- Staff was preparing to make recommendations for our FY 2019-2024 TPP to the Board in early 2018.
- Due to Governor McAuliffe's December 2017 proposal, which transferred substantial regional funding from NVRTA to WMATA, staff delayed presenting recommendations pending the 2018 General Assembly session.



Smart Scale

- Fairfax County has actively participated in the Commonwealth's Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funding.
- The process provides objective criteria for evaluating and comparing projects, which is an improvement over past practice.
- Like many other localities, Fairfax County has been successful in received funding for critical projects through the Smart Scale process.
- However, County staff has voiced concerns about Smart Scale:
 - Complexity of process:
 - Complexity impacts transparency for citizens and elected officials.
 - Applications are time consuming to prepare and probably costly to review.
 - Outstanding Questions:
 - Is this process sustainable over time?
 - Does greater analysis lead to better project selection than could be achieved by a more streamlined analysis?





Smart Scale (continued)

- Project Cost Estimate: Project costs are increasing significantly. VDOT has proposed 30% contingencies in applications.
 - 30% seems excessive in most cases and does not help with Smart Scale project benefit scores;
however,
 - 30% would not have covered the substantial updates recently experiences on projects in Northern Virginia / Fairfax County.
- Level of detail for project applications/timing
 - There is a built in advantage for projects that are further along in development, because Smart Scale questions can be answered more completely. Consequently, projects receive higher scores.
 - However, projects are not being funded until several years after applications are submitted.
 - Documents for many projects that are further along have shelf-life.
 - Community views may change, requiring some changes to scopes
- Available funding still far short of what is necessary to address transportation needs:
 - In 2017, the amount of funding requested was over 4 times what was allocated.



Smart Scale Summary

- Process is better than the past
- Process needs to be simplified
- Still not enough funding to meet needs across the Commonwealth



Route 28



Jones Branch Connector Bridge



Questions?

