A Citizens Guide

To Transportation Decision-Making

in the Washington Metropolitan Region

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

2006

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Contents

Open the morning paper. Turn on the radio or TV. You will almost always find stories about transportation.

One day, you hear that a big project—like the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement or the Metrorail extension to Dulles—is finally moving forward. The next day, you read that the region is facing a transportation funding crisis. Meanwhile, you listen to traffic reporters in the morning and the evening telling you how to avoid congestion traps, which seem to be slowing down your commute everywhere you turn.

And you may wonder: 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. These decisions, which are often spread over a number of years, can move a project forward or hold it back. 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. Not an easy job, but an important one.

Understanding the transportation planning process is also not an easy job, but we hope this Citizens Guide can help. The TPB designed this booklet to help 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***

The **urban core** of Washington continues to be our economic 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, 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.

The region's extensive **public transit** system is well used. More than 15 percent of all daily work trips throughout the region are taken with transit. More than 45 percent of work trips in the District of Columbia are made by public transit. Nationwide, Metrorail ranks second 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.

People in the region are increasingly **telecommuting**—working at home or from satellite locations. The TPB's 2004 State of the Commute Survey found that nearly 13 percent of the region's workforce telecommutes more than one day per week on average.

Membership of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Transportation planners pay particular attention to **commuting trips**, because these trips 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.

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.

* Unless otherwise noted, the numbers in this section are based on the 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 Cooperative Forecasts.

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

Who are the Key Players?

Washington 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. (Because decision-making powers are divided, the TPB, a regional transportation planning organization, was established for increased coordination. But more about that later…)

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 promote 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 highway funds.

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 and 14 citizens appointed by the governor. Among other things, the CTB is responsible for developing the Six-Year Improvement Program for transportation. See page 23 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. Local roads in Maryland are controlled and maintained by cities and counties.

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 from the District of Columbia through Montgomery and Frederick counties, to the city of Frederick and also into 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.

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.

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, through indirect state payments, and through 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 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 comprehen-sive 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 and 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.

Local governments in Maryland have more extensive land use powers than in Virginia.

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 most secondary roads. However, SHA maintains many secondary roads that are part of the state's 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.

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 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 13 percent of all regional transportation funds, according to a 1999 TPB study. This money comes from property and income taxes, and in some cases, sales taxes. 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 secondary road systems and local transit. In the District of Columbia, local taxes are largely used to support the Metro transit system, but also provide support for 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—69 percent—comes from state and federal sources. The allocation of these funds is part of the state budgeting process in the state legislature. 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 22-25 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, approves a spending bill. But unlike the states, the District of Columbia must submit its budget to the U.S. Congress for approval.

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 sometimes gets 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 D.C. 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.

- **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

Key Federal Laws Affecting Transportation Planning

ISTEA – THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT – 1991
Commonly called "Ice 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.

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). The staff for NVTA is provided by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. For more about the NVTA and the project selection process, see page 20.

- **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?

TPB MEMBERS
City of Alexandria
Arlington County
City of Bowie
City of College Park
District of Columbia
City of Fairfax
Fairfax County
City of Falls Church
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

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 in1965 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, 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 requirements of federal law 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. Since 2000, the CLRP has used a planning horizon of 25 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 these two main planning documents. The funding for the CLRP and TIP 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 has also developed a policy framework, known as the Vision, which 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 that will help the region to develop the transportation system it needs to sustain economic development, environ-mental 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

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

Technical information and analysis are prepared on a variety of topics. Travel monitoring activities gather information on current travel patterns and conditions. For example, data is collected on transportation facilities throughout the region to assess the performance of highway and transit facilities. Congestion levels are calculated based upon measures of the average number of cars per lane-mile of highway. Personal travel patterns are also surveyed 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 25-year Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The TPB's regional policies and federal metropolitan planning requirements exert an influence on 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 an unpredictable process. Projects sometimes get put on a fast track when elected officials or a group of citizens take a special interest in them. Others move forward when they are selected as preferred alternatives in studies of needs. In other cases, transportation improvements might be listed for years in local comprehensive plans or state plans before any action is taken to get them funded. Some proposed major projects are delayed or dropped because funding is unavailable or because other, preferred-alternative projects emerge. In other cases, projects are stalled because they are controversial.

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

Identifying Needs

Needs are identified through a variety of mechanisms throughout the region. Solutions are promoted by a number of different players. Here are some basic ways in which projects originate:

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 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. The states give highest priority to maintenance needs or 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 projects have become less frequent as the region's transportation system matures and funding tightens.

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 37-39 of this guide.

Regional 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 and local transit agencies also perform their own studies, in addition to working with WMATA.

WMATA's needs typically are categorized into three programs: 1) the Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP),which addresses maintenance and rehabilitation needs; 2) the System Access/Capacity Program (SAP), which includes funding to purchase trains and buses and make other improvements needed to handle new riders; and 3) the System Expansion Program (SEP), which includes new lines and services.

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.

Federal regulations require corridor or sub-area studies to be performed when major metropolitan highway or transit investments are being considered. In particular, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires a type of corridor study known as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before certain types of major projects may be constructed.

Corridor and sub-area studies typically examine the costs and benefits of various alternatives, and how effectively the different options would "get the job done." They also measure other social, economic or environmental impacts. Federal law requires adequate public involvement opportunities.

Just because a preferred alternative is selected, however, does not mean it will be built. Project funding involves policy and budget decision making—usually at the state level.

Long-Range Planning at the State Level

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.

Unlike the TPB's Financially Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), the long-range plans of the states and WMATA usually are not constrained by funding availability.

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 has developed a 2025 State Highway Plan that recommends specific road improvements for the next 20 years. VDOT has also 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 page 23.)

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.

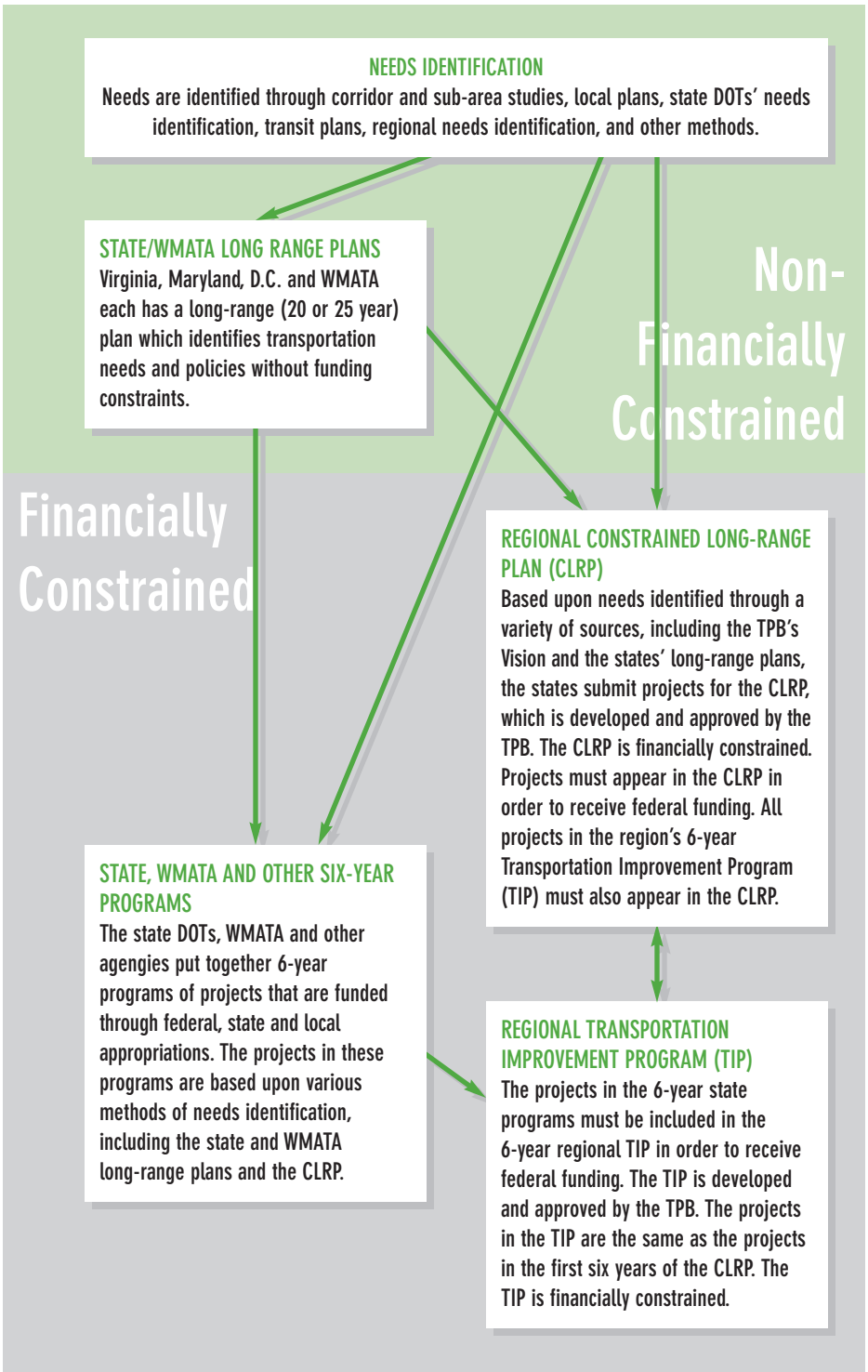
The priorities in TransAction 2030, together with VTrans2025 and the State Highway Plan, serve as the basis for Virginia's project submissions for the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan.

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 24-25), as part of the governor's transportation funding request.

Stages in Project Identification, Planning and Programming



MDOT also submits the Annual Attainment Report, which tracks the achievement of the MTP's goals and objectives.

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, is expected to promote policies to increased the city'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 2003, the WMATA Board adopted a 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) intended to guide capital investments for rehabilitating the bus and rail systems, and addressing ridership and capacity needs. It also establishes the top expansion priorities for each jurisdiction.

Six-Year Programs at the State Level

Each state also 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 and must be fiscally constrained.

At the conclusion of the budgeting and programming process in each state, the projects are submitted to the TPB for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is described on pages 30-31. The annual process is ongoing; just as the old programming cycle is ending, the new cycle is getting started.

Here's how project programming generally works in the different states:

Virginia

- **The General Assembly approves funding for transportation in a two-year Appropriation Act.**
  Every two years, the Virginia General Assembly approves the two-year (biennial) Appropriation Act, which contains all statewide funding, including transportation spending. The revenues in the act are based largely upon estimates provided in the governor's Budget Bill. The estimates for transportation revenues are prepared by the Department of Taxation and the Virginia Department of Transportation.

  The Appropriation Act generally allocates funding for broad transportation categories, not for individual projects, although the General Assembly sometimes earmarks funding for projects. After the first year

Manassas 234 Bypass — Developing a Project

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 and state legislators 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 NVTA 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 6-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.

of the biennial budget cycle is completed, the General Assembly has an opportunity to amend the budget.

- **The Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) annually approves the Six-Year Improvement Program.**
  Every year, the Commonwealth Transportation Board, which guides the work of the Virginia DOT much like a board of directors, develops the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). This program allocates money for transportation projects that are proposed for construction (including engineering and right-of-way acquisition), development or study in the next six fiscal years. In developing the SYIP, the Board considers the priorities identified by VDOT from the State Highway Plan (see page 20), as well as needs identified in VTrans 2025 and Northern Virginia's TransAction 2030.
  The program is updated annually. Funding for the Six-Year Improvement Program is based upon the two-year Appropriation Act approved by the General Assembly and anticipated revenues for the remaining years of the plan. The SYIP must include all projects earmarked by the General Assembly.

- **Virginia annually submits a list of projects to the TPB for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**
  Using the Six-Year Program as a basis for development, Virginia develops a six-year list of Northern Virginia projects for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is approved by the TPB. (See the next chapter for more information on the TIP.)

Maryland

- **During the Secretary's "Annual Tour," Maryland DOT officials get feedback about their draft six-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) from county and local officials, and from the public.** Every year, each county and its state legislative delegation identify local transportation priorities and officially transmit them to MDOT in the form of their annual "Priority Letter." Using the Priority Letters along with needs identified in the previous year, MDOT develops a draft Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), which is a six-year program of transportation projects.

  Each fall, MDOT goes on the road to get feedback on the draft CTP. In a process commonly called the Annual Tour, MDOT officials visit each county and present the draft six-year program. 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 approves the six-year program.** MDOT annually submits the State Report on Transportation to the Maryland General Assembly. This report, consisting of the long-range MTP (see page 20) and 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

Largo Metrorail Extension — Developing a Project

Although the Metrorail system that was initially in 1968 did not include a Blue Line extension to Largo, the efforts of citizens, local leaders and state officials succeeded in making it happen. 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 6-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 recommended 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 description above). With strong local support, Governor Parris Glendenning asked for general fund appropriations for the project in his 2000 funding request to the General Assembly, which he received. 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. Based on this funding agreement, the federal government paid 60 percent of the project cost, with the state funding 40 percent. The project was completed in 2004.

Metropolitan Branch Trail — Developing a Project

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 Area Neighborhood Commissions and other stakeholders to address issues and generate support for the project. When completed, the trail will provide recreation, transportation and economic development options for an underserved section of the city.

does not permit the General Assembly to add projects to the governor's funding request, although the legislature may delete projects or funding.

- **Maryland annually submits a list of projects to the TPB for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**
  Using the six-year CTP as a basis for development, Maryland develops a six-year list of projects for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is approved by the TPB. (See the next chapter for more information on the TIP.)

District of Columbia

- **The D.C. Council approves the annual Capital Improvement Program budget for transportation.**
  Every year, the mayor submits the draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to the D.C. Council for approval. The CIP is a six-year program that includes all capital expenditures for the city, including transportation projects. The D.C. Council, acting as a state legislature, holds hearings on the draft CIP, which it can amend. The Council must approve the CIP for it to move forward.

- **The U.S. Congress must approve the D.C. budget.**
  The District presents the budget from the CIP to Congress for approval every summer. After a review process, Congress approves the budget as part of the federal appropriations process.

- **D.C.'s six-year transportation program is submitted to the TPB for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**
  Using the CIP as a basis for development, the District develops a six-year list of projects for inclusion in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which must be approved by the TPB. (See the next chapter for more information on the 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. This CIP is developed with the input of WMATA's member jurisdictions. Projects programmed by the transit authority use funding from the federal government, and from state and local jurisdictions. Typically, WMATA's CIP has included three major funding categories (described on page 19): the Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP), the System Access/Capacity Program (SAP), and the System Expansion Program (SEP).

Every year, WMATA's chief executive officer submits a proposed six-year CIP to the WMATA Board Budget Committee. The proposed program may be revised by the committee, and then is reviewed and approved by the WMATA Board of Directors. The projects in this CIP are then submitted for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), which are approved by the TPB. (See next chapter for more information on the CLRP and 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. These projects also must be submitted to the TPB for inclusion in the regional TIP and CLRP.

The TPB: Tying the Projects Together

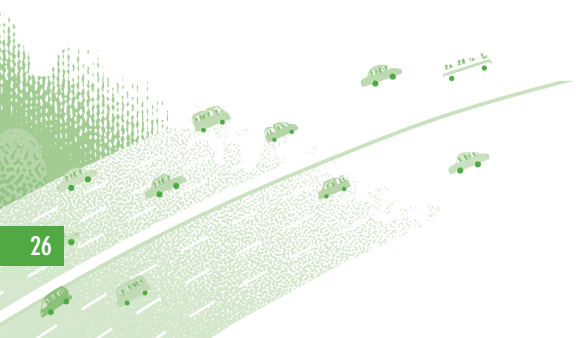
The TPB is the place where all approved projects are tied together. All projects that receive federal funding must be included in the TPB's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This process is described in the next chapter.

A Few Words About Building Or Implementing Projects

Of course, the story does not end here. Completing a transportation project requires a number of further steps, which can last a number of years. Major capital improvements often require a phase for additional development and evaluation, which might include a review of alternatives, and analysis of anticipated use of the facility, environmental impacts and costs. Public meetings focusing on alternatives are often held during this period.

If a major project gets past this stage, it will move on to final project planning, including preliminary engineering, further environmental study and the selection of a design alternative. A public hearing usually is held during this stage of planning.

Once an alternative is selected, the project enters design engineering, which includes development of construction plans, environmental re-evaluation and permit applications. The project implementers also must purchase right-of-way. Finally, when the project is ready to be built or implemented, a project contract is awarded and it proceeds to construction.



How Does the TPB Planning Process Work?

Although the TPB's transportation planning process is an ongoing cycle, a few documents are key to understanding how it works. These essential components include the TPB Vision, the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

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.

The Vision is the basic policy document for the TPB

The Vision

The Vision is a policy document that lays out eight broad goals to guide the region's transportation investments into the 21st century. The Transportation Planning Board unanimously approved the Vision in October 1998 after an extensive public outreach effort lasting three years. For a complete copy of the Vision, go to the TPB website at **www.mwcog.org/transportation**.

A host of objectives and strategies are included in the Vision to show how its eight primary goals can be reached. For example, Goal 4 in the Vision calls for the use of technology to maximize the effectiveness of the transportation system. A strategy in the Vision, which supports this goal, calls for a unified, technology-based method of payment—something like a "smart card"—for all transit, public parking and toll roads in the region.

The Vision is not a plan with maps or lists of specific projects. It is fundamentally a framework to guide decision making. The various jurisdictions in the region are expected to pursue policies and projects that contribute to specific elements of the Vision. The goals, objectives and strategies in the Vision should be used to buttress arguments for or against 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 has to approve those projects through the CLRP and the TIP.

The CLRP is a transportation blueprint for the next 25 years

The Constrained Long-Range Plan—The CLRP

The financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) is a comprehensive plan of transportation projects and a system-wide collection of strategies that the TPB realistically anticipates can be implemented over the next 25 to 30 years. The TPB has typically amended the CLRP every year, along with developing a new TIP. A new air quality conformity determination (described on page 29) must be made when the CLRP and TIP are amended.

What are we constraining?

QUESTION: **The "C" in CLRP stands for "constrained." But 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.**

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.

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 play a key role in influencing 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 are performed with computer models that predict air pollution levels over the next 25 years by facilities in the plan, and how much the air will be improved by cleaner gasoline standards and many other factors.

  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.

  If the TPB encounters difficulty in meeting conformity—or expects to—it may choose to adopt **Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMs)**, such as ridesharing and telecommuting programs, improved transit and bicycling facilities, clean fuel vehicle programs or other possible 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.

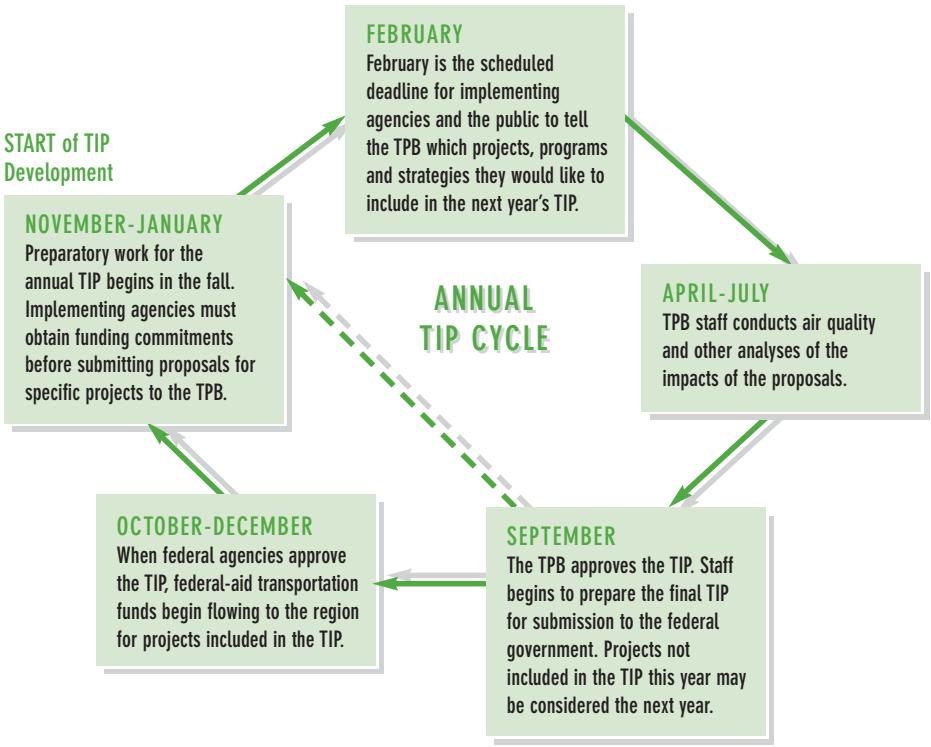
The TIP shows what will be funded and built over the next six years

The Transportation Improvement Program – TIP

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), provides detailed information showing which projects in the CLRP will be completed over the next six-year period. 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 and engineering phase, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Each of these phases may last one 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.

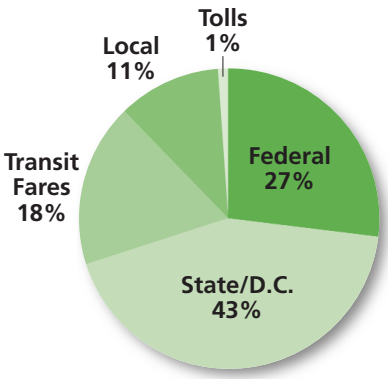
The TIP is usually updated each year. Preparatory work on the TIP begins in the fall. Final approval is scheduled for the following September. Each TIP includes many projects from earlier years, as well as new projects. Due to the time required for TPB and staff review—which includes complex air quality testing—specific projects must generally be submitted by the state transportation agencies by February of each year, in order to be approved by the TPB in September and included in the federal funding cycles beginning in October. The implementing agencies, in turn, need time to prepare the groundwork and obtain funding commitments for the projects prior to their submission to the TPB. For these reasons it usually takes at least one year for a proposed project to reach approval for funding.



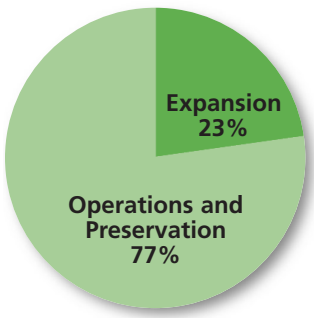
A Continuing, Cooperative Process

It would be a mistake to assume the work of the TPB can be boiled down to the production of a few documents. In fact, metropolitan transportation planning is a continuing and cooperative process. The TPB is a forum where leaders from both sides of the Potomac River regularly meet to discuss and coordinate transportation planning. This ongoing collaboration—on issues ranging from financial forecasting to emergency preparedness—is a hallmark of the TPB process.

Some Questions About Transportation Funding



Long-Range Plan Revenues
$93.3 billion (2004-2030)
(Constant Year 2004 Dollars)



Long-Range Plan Expenditures
$93.3 billion (2004-2030)
(Constant Year 2004 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 18.3 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.

Do we have enough money for our regional needs?

The region currently spends approximately $3 billion per year on transportation. Over the next 25 years, nearly 80 percent of the transportation revenues from current sources will be needed just to operate and maintain the system that is already in place. That leaves very little for major fix-ups or system expansions. In fact, we need an increase of more than 50 percent in current revenues to meet the transportation needs identified by state and local governments, and by Metro.

Why is transportation funding so limited?

For a variety of reasons. First of all, federal revenues are unlikely to be available at the same levels as they were in the past. Federal and state fuel tax revenue have declined in real terms, both because cars have become more fuel efficient (and therefore generate less revenue for each mile driven) and because the gas tax rates have not kept pace with inflation. In addition, building new facilities is more expensive than it was in the past, largely because of a scarcity of land, 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. WMATA is the only large transit agency in the country without a dedicated funding 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 future ability of roads and transit to handle anticipated travel. For example, a model can estimate how much a newly widened highway 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 to coordinate local and regional planning. 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/transportation**. You may also send your message by e-mail **(TPBPublicComment@mwcog.org)** or 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 1999 public involvement policy, 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 presents 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. For example, in 2000, the CAC requested that the TPB perform a study of different transportation and land use scenarios. This suggestion was taken up by the TPB in November 2000 when it decided to launch the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

Every year, the committee holds outreach meetings throughout the region in locations ranging from Anacostia to Manassas.

For more information about the CAC, contact TPB staff at (202) 962-3295.

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 provided 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 reflects 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 (MWCOG)
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002
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
2000 14th Street, NW – 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20009-2189
Telephone: (202) 673-6813
Fax: (202) 671-0642
www.dc.gov

Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 724-8000
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
Post Office Box 8755
BWI Airport, MD 21240
Telephone: (888) 713-1414
Fax: (410) 865-1198
www.marylandtransportation.com

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) 495-1302
www.mc-mncppc.org

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

City of College Park
4500 Knox Road
College Park, MD 20740-3390
(301) 864-8666
(301) 699-8029
www.ci.college-park.md.us

Key Agencies and Offices, continued

MARYLAND, cont.

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

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
Telephone: (240) 777-7900
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

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) 888-5709
www.co.pg.md.us

City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850-2364
Telephone: (240) 314-8103
www.ci.rockville.md.us

City of Takoma Park
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912-4998
Telephone: (301) 270-1700
Fax: (301) 270-5900
www.cityoftakomapark.org

Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
410/946-5400 – Annapolis
301/970-5400 – Washington, DC
www.mlis.state.md.us

Maryland Senate
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
410/946-5400 - Annapolis
301/970-5400 – Washington, DC
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-VDOT
Fax: (703) 383-2230
www.virginiadot.org

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
c/o Northern Virginia Regional Commission
7535 Little River Turnpike, Suite 100
Annandale, VA 22003
Telephone: (703) 642-0700
Fax: (703) 642-5077
www.novaregion.org/novatrans

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

City of Alexandria
City Hall
P.O. Box 178
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22313-3211
Telephone: (703) 838-4000
Fax: (703) 519-3356
www.alexandriava.gov

Arlington County
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201-54445
(703) 228-3000
www.arlingtonva.us

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

Fairfax County
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035-0065
Telephone: (703) 324-2000
Fax: (703) 324-1450
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.ci.falls-church.va.us

Loudoun County
1 Harrison Street, S.E.
Leesburg, VA 20175-7000
Telephone: (703) 777-0100
www.loudoun.gov

City of Manassas
9027 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-8200
www.manassascity.org

City of Manassas Park
One Park Center
Manassas Park, VA 20111-2395
(703)335-8800
www.cityofmanassaspark.us

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192
Telephone: (703) 730-OMNI (6664) or (888) 730-OMNI (6664)
Fax: (703) 583-1377
www.omniride.com

Prince William County
One County Complex Court
Prince William, VA 22192-9201
Telephone: (703) 792-6000
www.pwcgov.org

Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218
(804) 698-7400 (clerk's office)
Senate.state.va.us

House of Delegates
General Assembly Building
P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218
(804)698-1500 (Information Office)
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) 219-3565/3562
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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Citizens Guide to
Transportation Decision-Making

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