



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
RICHMOND

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
GENERAL LAWS  
TRANSPORTATION  
APPROPRIATIONS

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Secretary W. Sheppard Miller, III  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
Patrick Henry Building  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Miller,

I am writing with feedback on the recent SMART SCALE survey. I appreciate your outreach efforts to ensure members of the General Assembly have opportunity to share their feedback on how the SMART SCALE process can be made more efficient moving forward. I agree with you that the current process has increased transparency and accountability. As you look to review and refine the process, I have suggestions that are relevant to the Greater Richmond area. While the Greater Richmond region does not have the extent of need that Northern Virginia or Hampton Roads has, two areas of improvement would help SMART SCALE direct more efficient spending, with fair appropriation based on need still in-tact.

First, your survey defines "land use" as a way to support and improve non-work accessibility. Land use drives transportation demand, regardless of whether the use is for work or not. For instance, is a doctor visit or trip to school work or non-work? Both work and non-work accessibility create interconnected demand that should be considered as a whole. The Greater Richmond area has decent infrastructure, but poor land use decisions can overwhelm that infrastructure. Your survey's definition of land use could prove to be too narrow and not reflective of actual land use. On these lines, I introduced a language-only budget amendment that was in the House's approved report. This budget amendment requested VDOT to see if local land use decisions could overwhelm the safety and capacity of the I-95/Arthur Ashe interchange. This is an example of how the land use definition could impact this study. I am hopeful you can support this.

My second point of feedback is in regards to Richmond's unique infrastructure identity. As an older "legacy city," Richmond's city streets support stormwater, public and private utilities, as well as abandoned tunnels and streetcar lines. These factors often cause simple transportation infrastructure projects to cost substantially more in Richmond than in other jurisdictions. Can the SMART SCALE process reflect these additional barriers and costs to transportation solutions? I am happy to meet with you or host a public meeting with you and your staff on this topic to discuss this further.

Again, thank you for your outreach efforts and for extending the opportunity to provide feedback. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to hearing from you and to seeing the revisions to the SMART SCALE process that are to come.

Sincerely,

  
Betsy B. Carr