




MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 30, 2023
TO: W. Sheppard "Shep" Miller III
Virginia Secretary of Transportation
FROM: Ricardo Canizales
Director of Transportation 
RE: SMART SCALE Policy Proposals

Prince William County Department of Transportation (PWC DOT) staff greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on the proposed policy changes to the SMART SCALE program. PWC DOT recognizes the critical role of SMART SCALE in advancing multimodal mobility projects across the Commonwealth and the intent of these comments is to provide professional feedback to further improve the program and meet shared state and local goals for a data-driven, objective process that strategically invests public funds in high priority projects.

Based on the analysis and our evaluation of the data currently available, **PWC DOT supports the following OIPI recommendations:**

Factor Weight Redistribution

- PWC DOT supports the recommendation to modify the Land Use factor to address the confirmed program bias towards small projects and the proposed weight redistribution in Area Type A of 15 percent to Safety and 5 percent to Congestion Mitigation. PWC DOT has long advocated for additional weighting for the safety factor in Northern Virginia and based on data from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) showing traffic levels are approaching, and in some areas exceeding, pre-COVID volumes and reducing congestion remains a top priority for residents, PWC DOT agrees redistributing 5 percent to Congestion Mitigation is appropriate.

Elimination of Step 2

- PWC DOT supports eliminating step 2 of the fund allocation process to better ensure that High Priority Program (HPP) funds are being invested in high scoring projects of statewide significance. This recommendation is a clear data-driven recommendation from the analysis and will bring the allocation of HPP funds in line with the legislative and policy intent of the funds.

Forward Looking Congestion Benefit

- PWC DOT supports the recommendation to calculate congestion benefits for ten years in the future as part of the program scoring process. This proposal better aligns benefit calculations with programming and is critical to shifting Virginia's transportation network from reactive to proactive.

Forward Looking Economic Development Factor

- PWC DOT supports efforts to implement a data-driven, standardized process to more accurately capture and project the economic benefits of transportation projects through use of the VEDP Economic Impact model.

PWC DOT supports the following NOVA CTB member recommendations:

No Reduction to Application Limits

- There is no supporting data that limiting applications will equate to higher quality applications. PWC DOT asserts that the significant number of applications not meeting readiness requirements are indicative of the program requirements being misaligned with the timeline of the funding, and limiting applications will unintentionally result in Counties being less willing or able to assist small Towns in submitting projects and create additional obstacles to small jurisdictions advancing projects.

HPP Project Definition

- PWC DOT supports inclusion of the projects proposed by the NOVA CTB members in the policy definition for High Priority Projects. The proposed projects are consistent with the legislative intent and technical guidance for High-Priority Projects and should be explicitly included in the revised definition.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me directly at (703) 792-6825 or rcanizales@pwc.gov.