I. Proposed Changes to SMART SCALE Policy and Requirements

Eligible Applicants

What entities are eligible to submit applications for SMART SCALE projects?

Projects may be submitted by regional entities including Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Planning District Commissions (PDCs), along with counties; and cities and towns that maintain their own infrastructure and qualify to receive payments pursuant to §33.2-319. Transit agencies that receive state operating assistance from the Mass Transit Trust Fund, as established in § 58.1-638(A)(4)(b)(2) of the Code of Virginia, are also eligible to submit projects.

The responsibility for transportation in those towns that do not receive maintenance payments is with the County. Counties are encouraged to coordinate with towns and prioritize candidate projects for submission similar to the Secondary Six-Year Plan process.

What if VDOT maintains some roads in a town, but the town maintains the others?

Counties, cities, and towns that maintain their own infrastructure are eligible to submit applications regardless of the roadway system. Maintenance of the specific roadway system is not a requirement of eligibility.

What if a project crosses locality boundaries?

An eligible entity can submit an application as long as the project is located within the boundary of their jurisdictional authority. However, localities and regional planning bodies may submit joint applications for projects that cross boundaries, or the town may request the county to submit a project.

Timeline

When does the Round 3 SMART SCALE application process begin?

The application intake process for Round 3 of SMART SCALE begins on March 1st, 2018.

When is the deadline for creating a Round 3 SMART SCALE application in the application portal?

The deadline for creating a Round 3 SMART SCALE application is June 1, 2018. After June 1st a new application for Round 3 cannot be created. Once applications are created, applicants will be able to continue editing applications in the system until the August 1, 2018 submission deadline.

What is the deadline for a Round 3 SMART SCALE project submission?

The deadline for submitting all elements of a Round 3 SMART SCALE project is August 1, 2018.

Can a resolution of support for a Round 3 SMART SCALE project be submitted after August 1, 2018?

No. The final deadline for uploading all Round 3 project submission materials, including resolutions of support, is August 1, 2018. This is a change from prior years and it is believed to be appropriate based on the additional time between rounds currently in place.

When does a locality need to select the number of Round 3 SMART SCALE projects (4 or 8) it will submit?

Applicants have no limit to the number of applications that can be created in the portal; however applicants are limited on the number that can be submitted by August 1st, based on the proposed application limits.

Application Limits

How many SMART SCALE applications can be submitted?

Localities with a population *below* 200,000, and MPOs/PDCs/Transit agencies that serve a *below* 500,000, may submit a maximum of four applications.

Localities with a population *above* 200,000, and MPOs/PDCs/Transit agencies that serve a population *above* 500,000, may submit a maximum of eight applications.

Tier	Localities	MPOs/PDCs/Transit Agencies	Maximum Number of Applications
1	Less than 200K	Less than 500K	4
2	Greater than 200K	Greater than 500K	8

The source of population data for localities, MPOs and PDCs is the last preceding United States census (2010). Application limits for transit agencies were determined based on service area population in the 2010 National Transit Database (NTD). If service area population was not available in NTD, Census 2010 population was used to determine population in jurisdictions served by transit agency.

The listing of eligible entities, population data and tier/maximum number of applications is located on line at http://vasmartscale.org/documents/smart_scale_application_limitations.xlsx.

Can PDCs count MPO population within their boundaries when determining their maximum number of applications?

No. MPO population (within the approved MPO study area boundary) is subtracted from the PDC population to avoid double counting population.

Do transit agency SMART SCALE application count against local application maximums?

No. Public transit agencies are considered separate entities and do not count toward local maximum.

Does an application submitted by a county located within an MPO area count against the limit of applications for that MPO?

No. In such cases and by way of example, an eligible town (with a limit of 4), located within a county (with a limit of 4) and within an MPO area (with a limit of 4) with a nearby transit provider (with a limit of 4) has multiple opportunities to submit an application, possibly up to 16. As a reminder there are limitations on who can submit based on the different VTrans needs categories and eligibility to the High Priority and District Grant Programs.

Project Type	Regional Entity (MPOs, PDCs)	Locality* (Counties, Cities, and Towns)	Public Transit Agencies
Corridor of Statewide Significance	Yes	Yes, with a resolution of support from relevant regional entity	Yes, with resolution of support from relevant regional entity
Regional Network	Yes	Yes, with a resolution of support from relevant regional entity*	Yes, with resolution of support from relevant regional entity
Urban Development Area	No	Yes, with a resolution of support from relevant regional entity*	No
Safety	No	Yes, with a resolution of support from relevant regional entity*	No

For ineligible towns in an MPO area, if the county and MPO run out of applications can the town make a submission under the PDC?

Yes, but PDCs and MPOs are only eligible to submit projects on the Corridors of Statewide Significance or Regional Networks, and are only eligible for funding through the High Priority Program.

Is there a limit on the number of pre-applications that can be created in SMART Portal?

No, multiple pre-applications can be created for the purpose of review and pre-screening by VDOT, DRPT, and OIPI. However, the final applications submitted for evaluation and consideration for funding are subject to the application limit. We do recommend that applicants refrain from creating a large number of applications in the SMART Portal as VDOT, DRPT, and OIPI staff plan to pre-screen applications to ensure projects are eligible and meet a VTrans need.

Full Funding Policy

What does "committed" funding mean?

Committed funds are funds committed to cover the difference in total project cost and SMART SCALE request so that the project is fully funded through construction. Applicants are encouraged to identify other sources of funding (local, regional, proffers, other stated/federal funds) to reduce the amount of SMART SCALE funding. However, since committed funds are used to leverage and reduce the SMART SCALE requested amount forming the basis of SMART SCALE Score, applicants must submit a letter of commitment that they are responsible for such committed funds even if the original source of the funds is no longer available.

Additionally, if projects that are fully funded in a capital improvement program, a metropolitan planning organization's transportation improvement program or committed by a developer through local zoning approval process will be excluded from consideration in evaluating and rating for SMART SCALE. However, the Board recognizes that there are unique circumstances for large projects that require flexibility. Accordingly, a fully funded project may be considered under SMART SCALE if the total project cost is reasonably expected to exceed $1 billion and will start

procurement prior to the award of the next round of SMART SCALE but was ineligible for the most recent previous round of SMART SCALE due to project readiness.

Can an applicant leverage the same funds for multiple projects?

Yes, however if an applicant leverages the same funding on more than one request for funding (SMART SCALE, Revenue Sharing, TAP, etc.) and more than one project is selected for funding, then the applicant is responsible for covering the difference. A letter of commitment to fund the leveraged amount is required for each project.

Are proffered projects eligible for SMART SCALE funding?

SMART SCALE funding is not intended to replace other committed funding sources such as local/regional funding, proffers, and/or other committed state or federal funding sources. For a project phase or element that is expected to be funded or accomplished through proffers, the costs and benefits associated with that project element will be excluded from consideration in evaluating and rating the project for SMART SCALE. If the applicant desires to submit a project with proffered conditions and seeks to obtain SMART SCALE funding for, or in lieu of the proffer, the proffer must have been legally rescinded or terminated before the applicant may submit an application for the project.

Project Readiness

There are several recommendations to further clarify project readiness. These requirements have been proposed as a result of lessons learned from projects selected for funding in Rounds 1 and 2, where it is apparent that the projects were not yet ready to advance. Certain project readiness requirements are proposed to ensure planning and environmental review processes are not bypassed. Such projects may be at risk for advancing in the project development process. In such cases funding that was allocated to the project could have been utilized on another project in the same cohort. Additionally, one of the goals of the SMART SCALE process is to not only select the best projects for funding, but also to identify the best candidate projects for submission. Applicants are encouraged to conduct the appropriate level of planning and prioritizing of the needs within their jurisdictions.

Do applicants need a signal warrant analysis for a new signal, or an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) with a preferred alternative for a new interchange?

Yes. The IJR and signal warrant analysis formalizes the policy that was in place for Round 2.

Proposed new traffic signals must meet VDOT spacing standards and require an approved traffic signal justification report to justify their use as the appropriate traffic control method at the proposed location and the applicant must provide evidence that innovative intersection improvements have been considered and evaluated. Applicants concerned about resources needed to conduct a signal warrant analysis or Interchange Justification report should contact VDOT District Planner to coordinate technical assistance.

An Interchange Justification Report is only required for new access points on limited access facilities. Modifications to existing access points do not require a formal IJR or Interchange Modification Report (IMR) – a planning study is sufficient. For all interchange projects, new or modifications to existing, VDOT needs to understand the specific interchange configuration or modifications proposed for funding in order to calculate the benefits.

Do applicants need an alternatives evaluation for new roadways or roadway widening projects?

Yes. The proposed planning requirements for new roadways and major widenings are new. An applicant that proposes a major widening of an existing roadway must demonstrate that alternatives to optimize the existing capacity have been evaluated as part of the planning process, and that the alternatives analysis results were used in making the decision on the preferred alternative. The intention of this proposed requirement is not to force applicants to spend extensive time and resources conducting detailed studies. Instead it is meant to require applicants to show that they have considered options to maximize the performance and operation of existing capacity.

An example might be a two-lane roadway with 5,000-6,000 vehicles a day. The roadway has seen some growth over the years, but is not considered high growth – and the forecasted AADT is still within the capacity of a two-lane facility. However, through vehicle are being blocked by turning vehicles, and there are no existing turn lanes. In this case, VDOT would want to know that the provision of turn lanes had been evaluated, and deemed inadequate, before considering the construction of an additional through lane in each direction.

For new roadways, applicants should coordinate with VDOT/DRPT on the level of environmental document that may be needed prior to submission of an application.

Can an applicant list the alternatives that are anticipated to be evaluated?

No. VDOT and DRPT cannot evaluate multiple alternatives to determine the project benefits. The preferred alternative must be identified in the application. If more than one alternative is listed, then the State will request the applicant to modify the application to identify the preferred alternative. If applicant is unable to identify preferred alternative, then the State will deem the project not ready and will screen the project out from consideration.

What is the definition of "major widening," and what type of study is expected?

In general, major widening is defined as the addition of two or more general purpose through lanes. The level of study needed would need to demonstrate that the applicant has evaluated alternatives to optimize the existing capacity; this could be conducted in-house, and does not need to be a formal study.

Some project readiness documents may not be valid for six years after funding becomes available.

VDOT and DRPT understands the concerns of certain required documents for project readiness and agree that there is some risk in having certain information well in advance; however, we do not want to select a project for funding to then find out it cannot advance for a variety of reasons.

Project Support

How can an applicant demonstrate that a project has public support?

Applicants must demonstrate that a project has the support of key stakeholders and that the public has been afforded the opportunity to provide comments and input at the time of application submittal to SMART SCALE. A resolution of support from the relevant governing body or policy board, approved in a public forum with adequate public notice, is required at the time of application. This policy ensures the public was afforded the opportunity to provide input. The resolution of support must be uploaded in the SMART Portal as part of the project documentation.

There are two elements of public support eligibility:

- Public Support: Every application must have a resolution of support from its governing body.
- Eligibility to Submit Applications/Regional Support: For locality and transit-submitted project applications located within an MPO area, the project must have a resolution for support from the MPO.

Does a SMART SCALE project need to be in an MPO or PDC regional plan?

Projects are not required to be in the long range plans prior to application submission; however, federally eligible, projects must meet the relevant federal requirements for inclusion into the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) in order to make use of funding received through SMART SCALE. MPOs need to understand potential impacts to the long range plans before projects are selected for funding. Localities and MPOs are encouraged to follow the planning and prioritization processes currently in use by the MPO. A project submitted by a locality within an MPO boundary must provide a resolution of support from the governing MPO Policy Board.

Relationship of Major Project Elements

What does "contiguous" mean?

For the purposes of this policy contiguous means adjacent or together in a sequence. Transit stops or stations along a transit route or intersections or spot improvements along a corridor meet the definition of contiguous for the purposes of the project eligibility policy.

II.   Proposed Changes to SMART SCALE Evaluation Measures

Congestion Mitigation

Are traffic volumes analyzed for existing or future conditions?

Traffic volumes will be analyzed for existing conditions. This is a change to the person throughput and person hours of delay measures used in the first two rounds of SMART SCALE funding, which were based on future traffic conditions. The 2017 SMART SCALE Technical Guide will be revised to reflect this change.

How will the person throughput measure be used for transit and TDM projects?

To find the change in corridor total (multimodal) person throughput attributed to the project, SMART SCALE will look at the following data sources:

- Park and Ride: For park and ride projects, identify the location of the project using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool to query the population within 3 miles of the proposed park and ride improvement. The OnTheMap tool provides data that can be used to determine the average commuting distance and direction for this population.
- Transit: For transit projects, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will provide estimated daily ridership and hourly ridership for the proposed service.

For transit, TDM, bicycle and pedestrian projects, SMART SCALE will estimate total person throughput for existing and new users in the peak period. The person throughput reduction for new users is associated with any throughput savings associated with a shift from auto to the other mode.

Why not use person miles travelled, instead of person throughput miles?

This is essentially what the recommendation to scale the throughput measure will do. One important distinction is that the throughput measure calculates the person throughput above and beyond the facilities capacity that the proposed improvement will facilitate. So if a corridor is below capacity, it will not show an increase in throughput by adding additional capacity. To avoid confusion with the standard definition of person miles of travel we decided to use the terminology person throughput miles.

Accessibility

How will removing the 45 and 60-minute cap affect scores across modes, including transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects?

At the September CTB meeting the CTB expressed an intention to retain the 45 and 60-minute caps for the calculation of accessibility. The 2017 SMART SCALE Technical Guide will be revised to reflect this change.

Economic Development

What is the definition of "primary access to a site"?

To qualify as primary access to site the proposed site or parcel needs to be adjacent to the proposed transportation improvement. The proposed site is not required to have a planned entrance to the proposed transportation improvement.

Is there a limit on the amount of square footage of development that can be applied to measure ED.1?

Yes, the total amount of development that can be considered for the purpose of scaling the ED.1 measure is capped at 10 million square feet. An applicant may submit additional sites (square footage) above this cap; however, additional documentation will be required. The 2017 SMART SCALE Technical Guide will be revised to reflect this change.

What is the definition of a "detailed site plan," and why is it required?

A detailed site plan has construction documents, engineering/architectural drawings and specifications that include construction requirements for a project. These plans are detailed enough for construction and include details regarding building pad locations, grading, drainage, utilities, parking and entrances.

A conceptual site plan is a conceptual sketch, as part of a rezoning application that must include the following detail:

1. The location, area and density or floor area ratio (FAR) of each type of proposed land use within the development.

2. A delineation of developable land to exclude wetlands and terrain that will not be developed.

3. The location of any proposed roadway facility on site within the development's boundaries and the connectivity of the network addition as proposed.

4. The location of stub outs on adjoining property and the existing land use of such adjacent property, if applicable, and the location of any proposed stub outs within the network addition, if applicable.

Why are ZIP codes being used as the geography for economically distressed areas?

VDOT/DRPT researched multiple sources of information to determine the appropriate data set for economic indicators. Most data sets report at the jurisdiction level of counties and cities. Jurisdiction-level stress indicators can mask economically distressed areas within a particular jurisdiction. The data set provided through the Economic Innovation Group Distressed Communities Index (http://eig.org/dci) provides data at a more granular level tied to zip codes. Evaluation of economic distress at the zip code level was deemed more reliable than at the jurisdiction level.

Instead of a 3 mile buffer distance, could the buffer be scaled to project size and impact?

The buffer distance, which is measured by travel distance on the transportation network, has been adjusted by project type:

- Tier 1 Project Type (0.5 mile buffer): Turn Lane, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Bike Lane or Path, Sidewalk, Bus Stop, Park & Ride Lot
- Tier 2 Project Type (1 mile buffer): Access Management, Signal optimization, Increase Bus
- service, Improvement to Rail Transit Station
- Tier 3 Project Type (3 mile buffer): New through lane, new/improved interchange, new
- bridge, new Rail Transit Station, additional Rail Track

It should be noted, that the buffer distance is scaled for larger projects (i.e. longer projects have a larger buffer).

Why did this measure shift from evaluating the project's support of "new and existing economic development" to "future economic development"? How will redevelopment projects be considered?

Existing economic development was not eligible for inclusion in the calculation of this measure and no changes to that effect are under consideration. Pending and future development has always been the focus of this measure. The proposed changes are meant to better assess the readiness of proposed development. For a zoned property to be eligible it would need to be adjacent to the proposed improvement. At the site plan level, the proposed changes better distinguish between conceptual and detailed site plans. The allowable buffers around the project have also been reduced.

A redevelopment proposal of an existing property is eligible – an applicant would need to upload supporting documentation for the site to receive credit. If a locality is planning for redevelopment of an area with vacant structures, then conceptual redevelopment plans can be uploaded. If a private developer has submitted conceptual or detailed site plans for a redevelopment project then those can be uploaded as part of the site documentation.

Land Use Coordination

What is the definition of "mixed use"?

To qualify as mixed use a site or parcel must be designated in the locality's current or future zoning map as mixed use zoning or be located within a designated mixed-use zoning district, which allows for a range of land uses (residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and/or industrial) in a single development project.

Why is there a cap on the number of occurrences for each destination type, and how were points assigned for each destination type?

The non-work accessibility methodology was developed by analyzing existing levels of accessibility throughout the Commonwealth. The destination "caps" are based on the largest number observed anywhere in Virginia (actually the 99th percentile). In other words, nowhere in Virginia scores all 100 points. Points are awarded equally to each destination class (Education, Grocery, etc.) and divided among the total number of destinations (the "cap" or "target") in that class.

Why was the land use measure changed?

As part of research into development of the Accessibility score, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment consultant team also looked at access to non-work destinations, such as stores, schools and parks, which account for the majority of travel on the system. The team found that non-work access scores were quite meaningful – higher scores, for example, indicated higher quality of

life, lower motor vehicle demand and greater non-auto travel. These scores, based on empirical land use and transportation network data, can be readily calculated with the tool developed for measuring accessibility to jobs. In contrast, the original measure was more qualitative and speculative, e.g. points could be earned if a locality simply indicated mixed land uses could be one day approved in the project area.