

Smart Scale Technical Guide (November 13, 2017)

Revisions to September 2016 Version

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Includes references to successful completion of two rounds of Smart Scale process in 2015-2017
- Noted that beginning in 2017, the SMART SCALE implementation process transitioned to a biennial schedule

Section 1.1 SMART SCALE Legislation Requirements

- Added 2017 General Assembly legislation HB2241/SB1331 updating several items related to SMART SCALE
- Updated details on the High-Priority (HPPP) and District Grant (DGP) funding programs

Section 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- Clarified roles for Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), VDOT and DRPT
- Updated description of blind independent evaluation of 10% random sample of projects to ensure consistency
- Under applicant responsibilities, updated requirements related to two-part application process
- Introduced limit on the number of applications allowed per applicant using a two-tier system based on population (using 2010 Census):
 - 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 ten applications; or
 - A Board member may allow one additional application from a county within their district if (i) the project is located within a town that is ineligible to submit projects and (ii) the county in which the town is located will submit the maximum number of applications allowed. Only one such additional application is allowed per district.

Section 1.4 Biennial Cycle

- Replaced Figure 1.1 (Anticipated SMART SCALE Biennial Cycle)

- Updated application and evaluation process timeline to include references to two-part application process (pre-application and final application deadlines added)
- Added clarification that once applications are created, applicants will be able to continue editing applications in the system until the August 1, 2018 submission deadline. (Applications must be created by June 1st)

Chapter 2: Project Eligibility and Application Process

Section 2.1 Eligibility Requirements

- Entities eligible to submit a project include counties, cities, and towns that maintain their own infrastructure and transit agencies that receive state operating assistance from the Mass Transit Trust Fund
- Project Eligibility – adding more clarity on what projects are eligible for Smart Scale funding
- SMART SCALE is not intended to fund maintenance and State of Good Repair projects
- If a significant portion of the project costs are related to the repair or replacement of existing traffic control devices, structures or bridges asset replacement the project be excluded from consideration in scoring and rating for SMART SCALE
- Projects that are partly/fully funded
 - Clarified in the policy that 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
 - Projects cannot already be fully funded in the SYIP for VDOT, DRPT, or NVTVA.
 - Benefits associated with the fully funded or committed project element(s) should be excluded from consideration in scoring and rating the project for SMART SCALE
 - 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.
- Project features must be associated such that they are contiguous or of the same improvement type (e.g., signal improvements, transit stations, etc.) For the purposes of this policy, contiguous means adjacent or together in a sequence.
- Added Table 2.1 Project Types Eligible for SMART SCALE Funding
- Entities Eligible to Submit Projects
 - To support local and regional planning efforts and consistency with the Constrained Long Range Plans, localities and transit organizations

are required to obtain a resolution of support from the relevant regional planning body prior to submitting an application

- Locality submitted projects within metropolitan planning organization boundaries must include a resolution of support from the MPO.

New Section 2.2 – Project Readiness

- Added guidance on the required level of planning and supporting documentation needed for major projects; ex. alternatives analysis and selected of preferred alternative by type of project:
 - Grade Separation Projects
 - New Traffic Signals
 - New Location Facilities
 - Major Corridor Widening projects (defined as the addition of two or more general purpose through lanes)
- Environmental (NEPA and Permitting)
 - If NEPA is not complete, applicants must coordinate with VDOT/DRPT to assess the anticipated level of NEPA document required and the current status
- Public Support - Must demonstrate that a project has the support of key stakeholders and the public at the time of application submittal to SMART SCALE

Section 2.3 Screening Process

- Revised the description of the VTrans needs screening and added references to the VTrans website
 - If a project does not address an identified need in VTrans, it will be screened out of the SMART SCALE process.

Section 2.4 Application and Validation Process

- Beginning in 2018, project sponsors are required to create a pre-application within the on-line application tool by June 1.
- Project schedule - For a future planned phase start, the applicant should assume a start date of no earlier than August 1, 2023 (Fiscal Year 2024) to align with funding availability for round 3 of SMART SCALE.
- More detail added on preparing cost estimates by project phase
- Pre-Application Coordination and Submission
 - Added references to on-line application tool (SMART Portal)

- Updated list of pre-application minimum inputs to be provided by the applicant
- Noted that on-line application tool has been enhanced to provide the ability to submit applications for other VDOT programs
- Updated Table 2.2 SMART SCALE Measure Data Responsibility
 - For roadway improvements on segments with significant transit use, bus ridership counts should also be provided.

Chapter 3: Evaluation Measures

Section 3.3 Accessibility Measures

- Measure assesses the average change in cumulative access to employment opportunities (previously was described as cumulative change)

Section 3.5 Economic Development Measures

- ED.1 – Economic Development - Established maximum square footage of 10 million square feet for scaling scoring value.
- ED.2 – Intermodal Access - The scoring value is scaled by the length of the project.

Section 3.6 Land Use Measures

- New L1 measure : Amount of population and employment located in areas with high non-work accessibility
- New L2 measure: Increase in amount of population and employment located in areas with high non-work accessibility, between present day and the horizon year of 2025

Chapter 4.0: Project Evaluation and Rating

Sections 4.1 through 4.4

- Table 4.1 - PDC-MPO Factor Weighting Typology
 - Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission changed to category D
- Added some language clarifications

Section 4.5 Project Scoring

- Corrected use of term “SMART SCALE score” instead of “value”
- Updated definitions of the key terms, distinguishing between measure values and the overall SMART SCALE score
- Table 4.14 (Calculate SMART SCALE Score) has been updated to reflect the new land use measures. The text under “Methodology” has been updated to match the table.



- Everything is Relative – provided an example using the Transform66: Outside the Beltway project
- Project Segmentation – Fixed Guideway Projects: To account for future benefits of projects that are segmented, a percentage of the benefits derived from all segments of a larger plan will be used in the evaluation of a specific segment.

Chapter 5: CTB Prioritization and Programming

- Prioritization and Programming Process
 - Pursuant to Section 33.2-214.2 of the Code of Virginia, project values will be made publicly available no later than 150 days prior to the CTB’s vote to adopt the Six-Year Improvement Plan. Under current practices this requires that the results be released at the January CTB meeting.
- Funding Decisions for Draft SYIP
 - Noted that to meet its statutory obligation, the CTB will adopt a Six-Year Improvement Program in June of each year effective July 1st, though SMART SCALE will only happen every other year under the biennial SMART SCALE Cycle.
- Removed old Section 5.2 “Adoption of SYIP”, as this duplicated schedule information listed in Section 1.4
- Section 5.2 Process Issues
 - Referenced CTB adopted an updated SYIP policy on December 7, 2016
 - Changes in Project Scope/Schedule/Cost
 - Clarified guidance when there are changes in project scope and budget - the change in project scope must be assessed to determine the impact on the benefits.
 - If the scope is increased, the applicant is responsible for the additional cost.
 - If SMART SCALE benefits will be impacted, then a quantitative assessment will be conducted to determine the level of impact. If warranted the project will be reevaluated utilizing the same methodology and maximum measure values for the round of SMART SCALE in which the project was selected for funding.
 - In the event the CTB does not approve changes in project scope (affecting the score), they may choose to cancel the project. In such cases, the remaining SMART SCALE funds will be reserved to address budget adjustments on existing SMART SCALE projects or reserved for allocation in the next solicitation cycle for SMART SCALE. The CTB may also choose to advance the original scope of the project.

- Fully Funded Project Applications - 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.
 - Projects cannot be already fully funded and listed in the VDOT/DRPT and NVTA SYIP
 - If a fully funded project is submitted with additional features that are not yet funded, the benefits associated with the fully funded or committed project element(s) will be excluded from consideration in evaluating and rating the project benefits for SMART SCALE.
 - Other committed funds must have at least been applied for at the time of the SMART SCALE application submission.
- Program Funding Changes
 - Provided clarification that the Board may adjust the timing of funds programmed to projects selected in previous SMART SCALE cycles to meet the cash flow needs.
 - Explained what would happen to surplus funds in cases where programmed funds are no longer needed for delivery of a project due to estimate decreases, contract award savings, schedule changes, etc..

Appendix A: Safety Measures

- Removed crashes that are the result of driving under the influence from consideration in scoring
- Combined EPDO value for fatalities and all injuries (dropped separate values for fatalities and for severe injuries)
- Weight the number of crashes by severity using the EPDO crash value scale reported by FHWA and adjusted to the mid-year of the analysis period.

Appendix B: Congestion Mitigation Measures

- Person throughput and person hours of delay analysis will now use existing year traffic volumes, not future year traffic volumes.
- New roadway facilities tested with a regional travel demand model should be tested using the SYIP highway network.

Appendix C: Accessibility Measures

- Clarified that measure assesses the average (not cumulative) change in access to employment opportunities in the region as a result of project implementation
- Accessibility to jobs by mode is calculated for auto and transit modes only – pedestrian and bicycle modes are not calculated. Pedestrian network is used in the calculation of the transit accessibility.

Appendix D: Environmental Quality Measures

- No significant changes

Appendix E: Economic Development Measures

- ED.1 – Project Support for Economic Development
 - Zoned properties must get primary access from project or be directly adjacent to the proposed transportation project in order to be eligible
 - Remove 0.5 points for consistent with local and regional plans - project specifically referenced in local comp plan or regional economic development strategy = 0.5 points
 - Project within economically distressed area can get up to 0.5 points
 - Reduced buffer to max of 3 miles
 - Points adjusted depending on status of site plan - Conceptual (0.5, 1) vs detailed site plans (2, 4 points) – points based on whether submitted or approved
 - Established maximum square footage of 10 million square feet
 - Added exception that applicant may submit additional sites (square footage) above this cap with required documentation
 - Added definitions of mixed- use development and redevelopment
- ED.2 - Intermodal Access
 - Scale freight tonnage-based measure by the length of the improvement

Appendix F: Land Use Coordination Measure

- New L1 measure : Amount of population and employment located in areas with high non-work accessibility
 - Non-work accessibility is defined as the number of key non-work destinations that are accessible within a reasonable walking distance
- New L2 measure: Increase in amount of population and employment located in areas with high non-work accessibility, between present day and the horizon year of 2025