



**SMART
SCALE**

*Funding the Right
Transportation Projects
in Virginia*

Overview & HRTPO Policy

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Background

- **House Bill 2 (HB2)**, signed into law in 2014, required the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop a statewide prioritization process to guide the selection of projects to be funded in the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).
- The **FY 2017-2022 SYIP** is the first to be developed using the HB2 process.
- The new name for the process – **SMART SCALE** – was announced on June 14, 2016.
- **SMART** stands for System for the Management and Allocation of Resources for Transportation.
- **SCALE** refers to the six evaluation factors used in the prioritization process – Safety, Congestion mitigation, Accessibility, Land use, and Economic development and the environment.

Round 1 Summary

- *Nearly \$1.7 billion was available to allocate:*
 - *\$833 million in High Priority Program (HPP)*
 - *\$833 million in District Grant Program (DGP)*
- *321 applications submitted:*
 - *\$6.95 billion in SMART SCALE requests*
 - *\$6.2 billion in other funds included in applications*
- *84% of projects identified highways as the principal improvement type*
- *287 projects advanced beyond the screening stage*
- *Total projects funded: 163, with a total cost of \$3.2 billion*

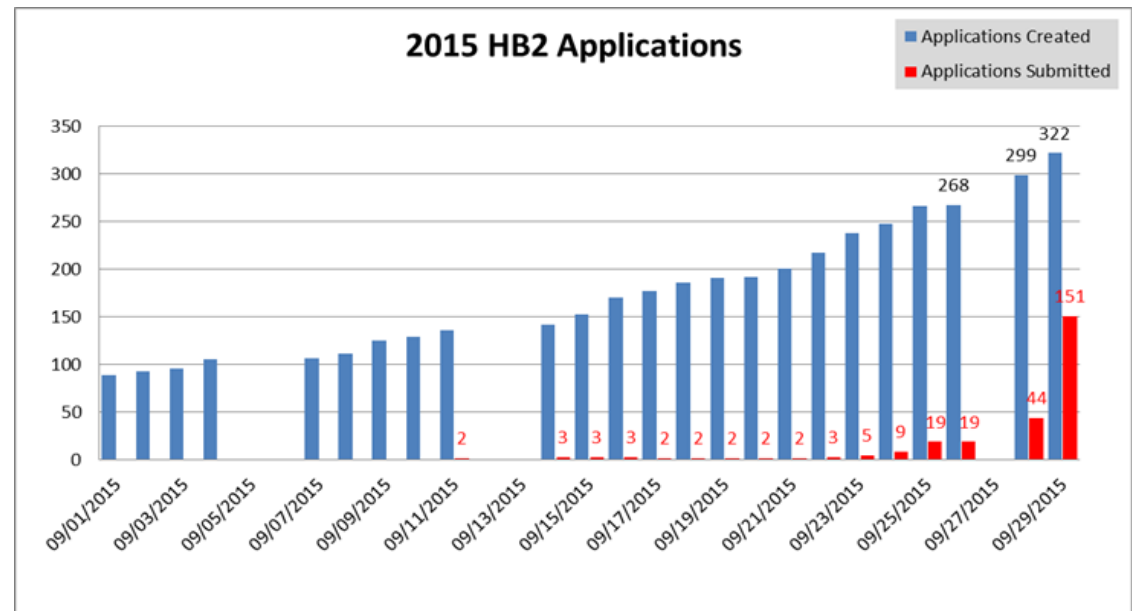
Areas for Improvement Identified by Implementation Team

- **Guidance and Information Sources**
 - Update and improve clarity of Policy Guide and FAQs
 - Add tutorials and include example projects
- **Pre-Application Training and Coordination**
 - Start coordination process now
 - Develop “Train the Trainer” materials on process to ensure consistent guidance statewide
 - Provide clear direction on application requirements, and ensure project readiness before proceeding with application
 - Require completion of the pre-application form
- **Validation/Screening**
 - Define criteria for meeting VTrans needs and project type eligibility
- **Evaluation and Scoring**
 - Provide better definitions of inputs such as mixed-use land use and economic development impacts
 - Potentially consider tiers of projects based on size – so that a turn lane project is not competing against a mega project

Recommendations to Improve Application Process

- **Update application tool to allow feedback during application submission (pre-screening and validation)**
- **Strongly encourage submission of information early**
 - Advance knowledge of the number and types of applications
 - Key fields of on-line application filled out by August 15th to guarantee technical assistance from VDOT and DRPT – Notice of Intent to Apply

Over half the 321 submitted applications were created the final two weeks



Recommendations for Administrative Process

- **Projects that include matching funds from other sources will require documentation of availability of those funds**
- **If project cost at advertisement or award exceeds thresholds in Smart Scale policy then project Smart Scale benefits / cost will be re-calculated**
 - IF revised benefits/cost is higher than lowest scoring funded district project then project moves forward
 - IF revised benefits/cost is lower then funds will be de-allocated unless CTB takes action to retain funding on project and address shortfall

Recommendations for Factor Areas

- **Environmental Factor**
 - Projects receiving significant amount of points without providing any other benefits
 - Determine points by scaling environmental score based on impact to environment (current methodology) and benefits in other categories.
- **Economic Development Site Support**
 - Types of projects evaluated do not influence growth over the same impact area
 - In many localities zoning took place 30+ years ago and does not necessarily have relationship to current growth patterns
 - Restrict the distance around certain types of projects where benefits may be considered – buffers by project type
 - Eliminate the extra scaling point for having zoning in place

Recommendations for Factor Areas

- **Reliability**

- Buffer Time Index (BTI) comes from INRIX data – does not provide statewide coverage
- For facilities where data does not exist, method pulls BTI from other nearby facilities – this approach leads to questionable results on low volume roadways
- If INRIX BTI data does not exist, assume there is no reliability issue and score will be 0
- Include scaling factor based on vehicle miles traveled – to better scale the benefit – testing underway

- **Intermodal Access**

- Questionable results when comparing measure scores to project types, specifically with using mainline tonnage
- Refine methodology to adjust tonnage for ramps

Recommendations for Factor Areas

- **Safety**
 - Fatal and Severe Injury crashes represent about 7% of total crashes
 - Some fatal and severe injuries crashes are random and due to factors unrelated to roadway design
 - Look at Fatal and All Injury crashes – apply federal EPDO weighting
- **Land Use**
 - Measure provides points based on projected future density but does not consider whether there is any growth between today and the future
 - Base score on both future density and the change in density between today and the future

Modification for Scoring Process – Corridor-based Transit Improvement

- **Transit**

- Chicken/Egg problem – all VRE platforms must be extended to add new rail cars to all trains, but only final platform extension would receive benefits under current methodology
- Example: Brooke and Leeland platform extensions by themselves do not allow for longer trains but without those improvements longer trains will never be able to run
- Analyze full corridor improvement (station + future capacity improvement) and assign benefit score on a pro-rata basis– If station improvement is 10% of the cost, then we take 10% of the ultimate benefit
- \$10,000,000 platform and station improvement that will facilitate a \$90,000,000 future investment in rolling stock and service expansion. We would analyze full improvement, then take 10% of Total Benefit Score

- **VDOT/DRPT will offer assistance to communities**
 - Evaluate whether identified need can be addressed through operational improvements or TDM
 - Evaluate current scope to determine if there are components that do not address identified need(s)
 - Evaluate current scope to determine whether design can be modified or design exceptions utilized to reduce costs

Recommendations to Improve Application Process

- SMART SCALE on-line application tool undergoing improvements based on feedback
 - Improved logic for applicant eligibility
 - Improved logic for some factor areas (especially Economic Development)
- Online application tool will be expanded to include other funding programs:
 - Revenue Sharing Program
 - Transportation Alternatives Program
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program
 - Bicycle-Pedestrian Safety Program

How To Score Better

- *Keep Weighting Framework in mind*
- *Project Cost – focus scope on problem/needs*
- *Think beyond SOVs – opportunities for active transportation, transit, Transportation Demand Management*
- *Economic Development – leaving blank = 0 points*
- *Evaluation Team cannot consider data/information that is not included in application submittal – upload studies and other analysis relative to project being submitted*

HRTPO Policies

- *It is the prerogative of the HRTPO Board whether to apply for projects at the request of other entities.*
- *The HRTPO Board will specify the priority order of any SMART SCALE projects submitted by the HRTPO.*
- *For HRTPO Resolution of Support, projects must be consistent with the fiscally-constrained LRTP and TIP, as applicable.*
- *For HRPDC Resolution of Support, projects must be consistent with the fiscally-constrained LRTP, TIP, and/or Rural LRTP, as applicable.*
- **HRTPO Guidance on SMART SCALE:**

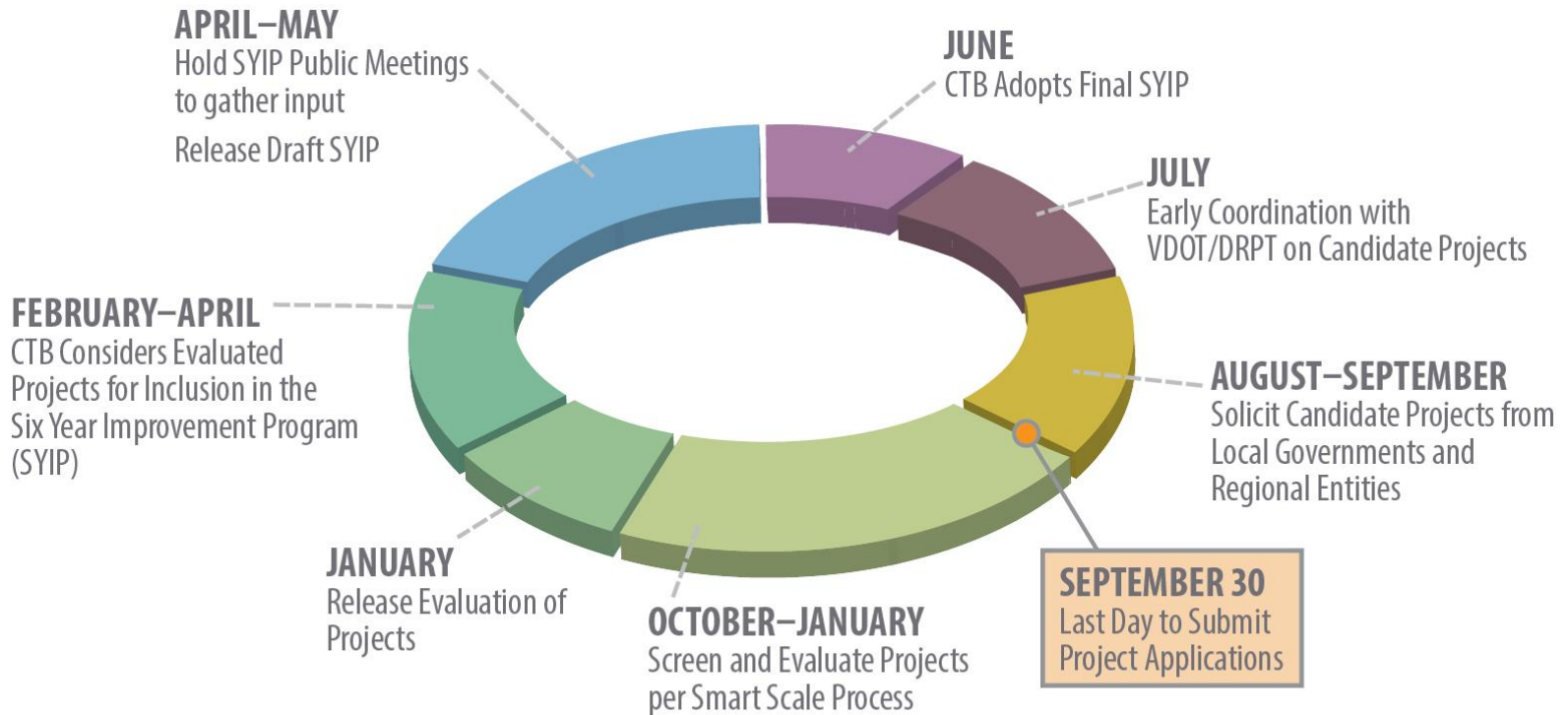
[www.hrtpo.org/page/smart-scale-\(hb2\)/](http://www.hrtpo.org/page/smart-scale-(hb2)/)



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Biennial Cycle



Schedule and Next Steps

- **July**
 - July 13 – Deadline for Public Comment on proposed changes to SMART SCALE
 - July 20 – CTB to approve resolution for revisions to policy
 - Training and outreach for Round 2
- **August**
 - August 1 – Round 2 application cycle opens
 - August 15 – Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply - guarantee technical assistance
- **September**
 - September 30 – Deadline to submit Round 2 application
- **October 1 to January 1**
 - Round 2 analysis and scoring
- **January to June**
 - Round 2 project selection and programming