

Non-Metropolitan Area Consultation Process



APRIL 2023

 Office of
INTERMODAL
Planning and Investment

**VDOT**
Virginia Department of Transportation

**DRPT**
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL
AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

VIRGINIA'S NON-METROPOLITAN AREA AGENCY CONSULTATION PROCESS

What Is This Process?

This guide documents how and when non-metropolitan officials can participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia's transportation planning process.

Virginia has the third largest state-maintained highway system in the nation, and most of those highway miles are not in urban areas. Input from non-metropolitan transportation officials is vital to ensure the needs of their communities are met by the state's transportation plans and programs.

Why Is It Needed?

Because not all regions in Virginia are served by a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the Commonwealth of Virginia uses this process to:

- Ensure all local officials throughout the state have a voice in the planning process.
- Improve participation in the planning and programming processes.
- Deliver better transportation projects.

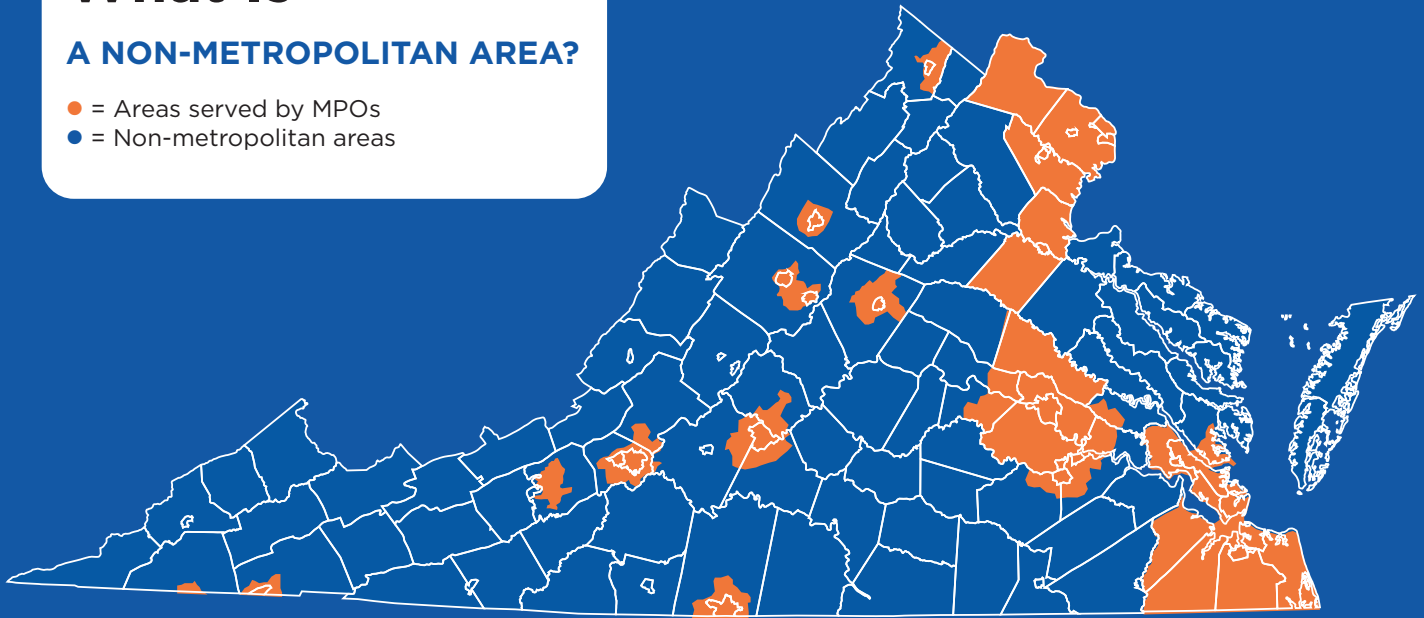


Virginia has the third largest State-maintained highway system in the nation, and most of those highway miles are **NOT IN URBAN AREAS.**

What Is

A NON-METROPOLITAN AREA?

- = Areas served by MPOs
- = Non-metropolitan areas



THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS: COOPERATION MEANS WORKING TOGETHER

Documentation, review and update of the non-metropolitan cooperation processes for the development of the State Transportation Plan (VTrans) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a federal transportation planning requirement ([23 CFR 450.210\(b\)](#)).

Federal statutes require the cooperative development of statewide transportation plans and programs by the state, metropolitan planning organizations for urbanized areas, and officials with responsibility for transportation in non-metropolitan areas. The requirements apply to highway planning as well as public transportation projects, per [23 USC 135\(a\)\(3\)](#) and (e)(1), and 49 USC 5304(a)(3) and (e)(1); in the development of the statewide transportation plan per 23 USC 135(f)(2)(B) and 49 USC 5304(f)(2)(B); and in the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program per 49 USC 5304(g)(2)(B).

“Cooperation” is federally defined: the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

Who Are The Decision-Makers?

The organizations shown below all have key roles in developing state transportation plans and programs.

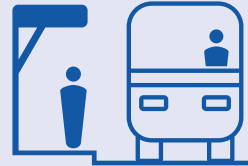
Secretary of Transportation

The **Secretary of Transportation** guides development and maintenance of Virginia's transportation system and chairs the CTB.

The CTB

The **Commonwealth Transportation Board**

oversees transportation projects and initiatives for the Commonwealth of Virginia.



LOCAL LEVEL



PDCs

Planning District Commissions are responsible for Regional Long-Range Plans (RLRPs) for non-metropolitan transportation.



Local

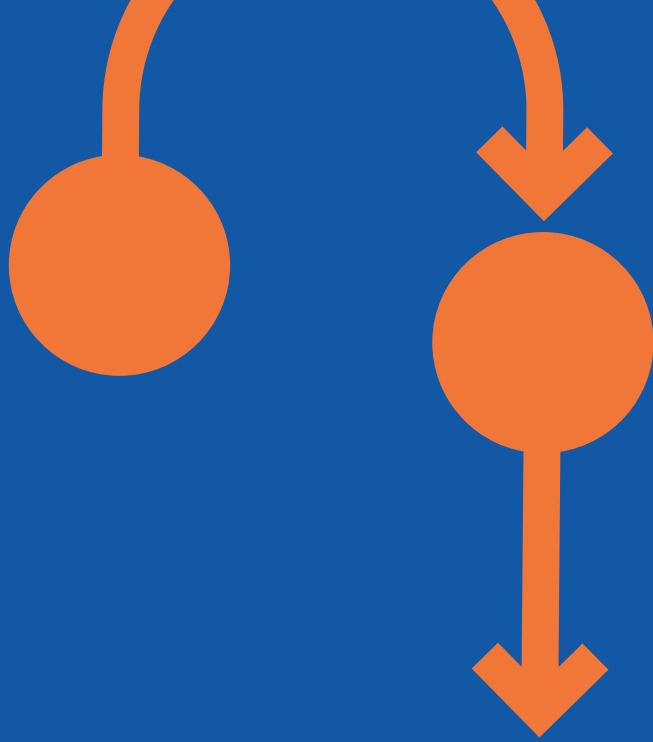
Governments

are responsible for local comprehensive and transportation plans.

Other local and regional agencies include: metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), transit agencies, Virginia Rail Express (VRE), and regional transportation authorities

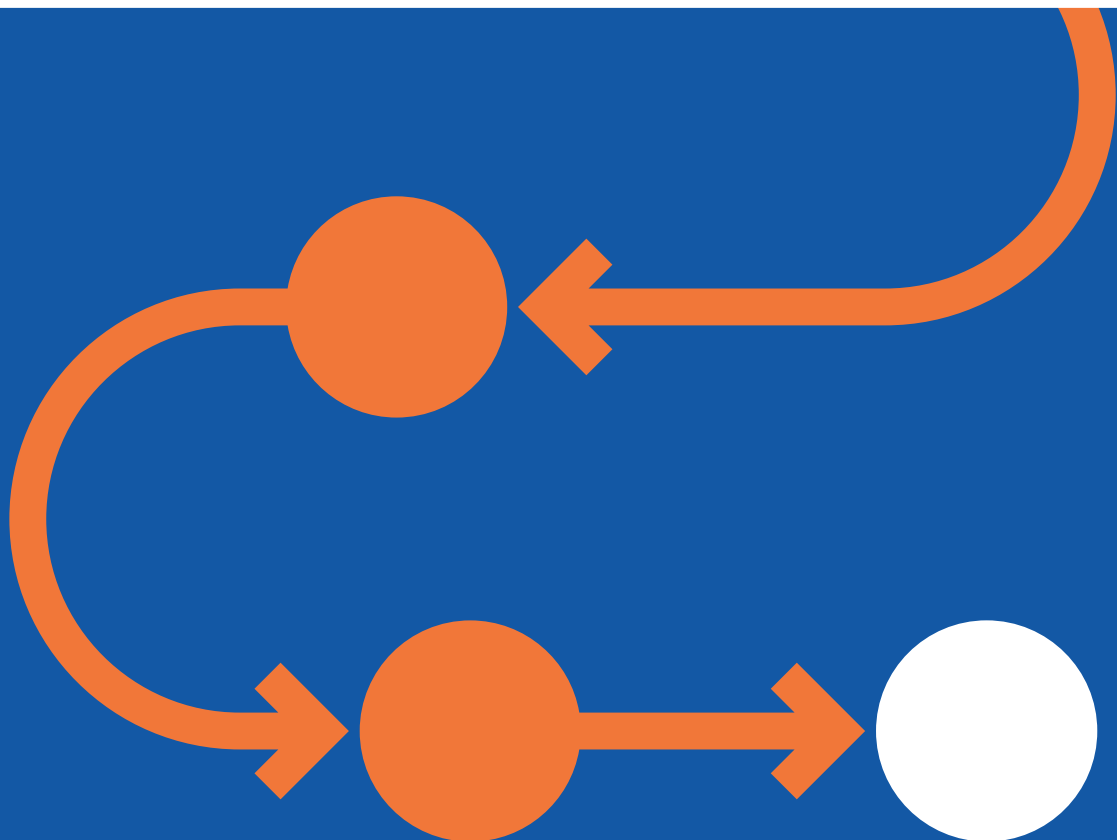
Additional state-level transportation entities (other than the Motor Vehicle Dealer Board and the Commercial Space Flight Authority Board) include:

- The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) (<http://www.dmv.state.va.us/>)
- The Virginia Aviation Board (<https://doav.virginia.gov/about/affiliates-and-partners/va-aviation-board/>) which directs the Department of Aviation (DOAV) (<http://www.doav.virginia.gov/>)
- The Virginia Port Authority Board of Commissioners which directs port facility operations performed by the Virginia International Terminals (VIT) (<http://www.portofvirginia.com/>)



How to participate

There are numerous opportunities for non-metropolitan officials to contribute to Virginia's transportation planning processes. The following pages include information on the state and local family of plans and programs that guide our transportation investments.

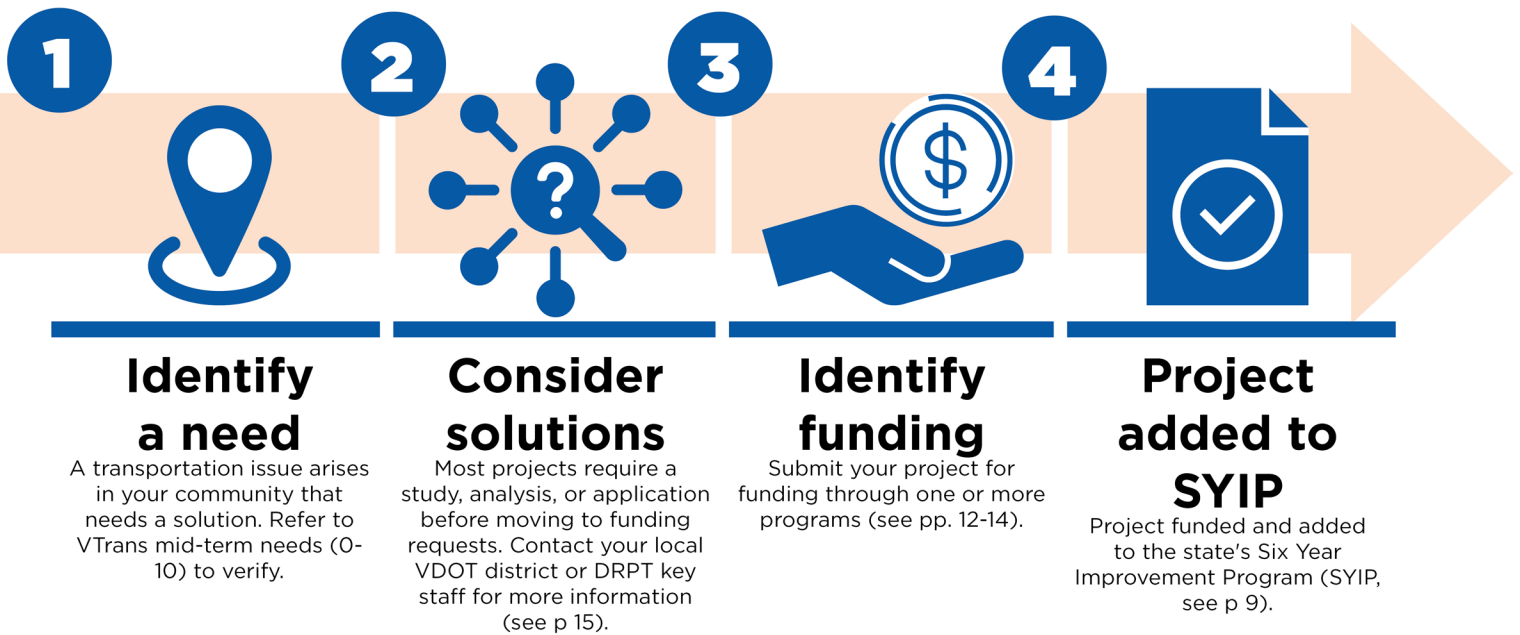





Serving all of Virginia

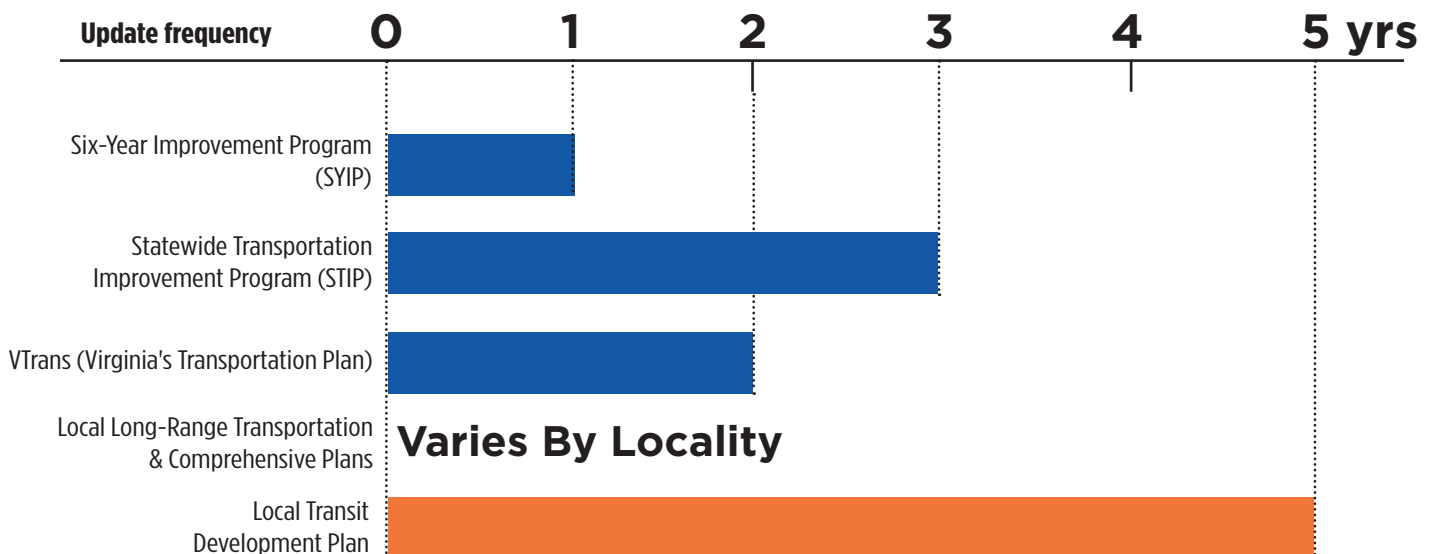
Virginia's mission is to plan, deliver, operate, and maintain a transportation system that is safe, enables easy movement of people and goods, enhances the economy, and improves our quality of life. We serve all citizens of Virginia regardless of a person's economic, social, ethnic, racial, age, sexual, physical, mental, or geographic circumstance. Virginia is committed to equitable delivery of its programs and services. Many of Virginia's programs incorporate equity in the project development and selection process.

Steward your project from concept to completion.

NEED HELP? Contacts are listed on p. 15.

Provide input during routine plan and program updates.



VTrans: Virginia's State Transportation Plan

The umbrella document for all Virginia transportation planning efforts



UPDATES:

Each VTrans focus area has its own update cycle.

1. Vision, Goals & Objectives: **4 years** (*even years, e.g. 2022*)
2. Transportation Needs & Priorities: **2 years** (*odd years, e.g., 2021*)
3. Long-term Risk Register: **1 year**
4. Strategic Actions: **4 years** (*even years, e.g., 2022*)



PLANNING HORIZON:

Mid-Range: **0-10** yrs

Long-Range: **20+** yrs



WHO TO CONTACT:

Statewide Transportation Planning (STP) Manager, OIPI
(see "Contact OIPI," p 15)

WHAT DOES VTRANS DO?

VTrans is the statewide multimodal transportation plan that: (1) establishes an overarching vision and goals for the transportation system; (2) identifies transportation needs, also referred to as VTrans mid-term needs, for the next 10 years; and, (3) identifies long-term (20+ years) risks and opportunities resulting from external factors.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN UPDATES

Projects prioritized for funding through SMART SCALE, one of Virginia's largest

transportation funding programs, must meet a need identified in VTrans. Similarly, VDOT's Revenue Sharing Program prioritizes projects that meet one or more VTrans mid-term need.

GET INVOLVED IN THE VTRANS PLANNING PROCESS

VTrans benefits from active engagement from localities, PDCs, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and the public within and outside the established metropolitan areas. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the performance-based planning process to identify mid-term needs and long-term risks and opportunities.

Prepare your local comprehensive plan

- Required for all local municipalities
- Must be reviewed every 5 years by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend.
- Must include a transportation element that is consistent with VTrans.

IMPORTANT DATES

All jurisdictions, urban and rural, are invited to workshops to provide input on the methodology used to identify needs. Other opportunities to provide input may include:

- Spring transportation meetings
- Webinars to review and comment on vision and goals, mid-term needs, long-term risk and opportunity register, etc.
- Presentations at [PDC](#) meetings
- One-on-one information sessions (by request)



MORE INFORMATION:

<http://vtrans.org>

Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP)

A funding allocation program for transportation projects proposed for construction development or study over the next six years



UPDATES: Every **1** year



PROGRAM HORIZON: **6** yrs



WHO TO CONTACT:

Infrastructure Investment Division Director, VDOT; Financial Programming Manager, DRPT (for rail, public transportation, and TDM)

HOW DO PROJECTS GET INTO THE SYIP?

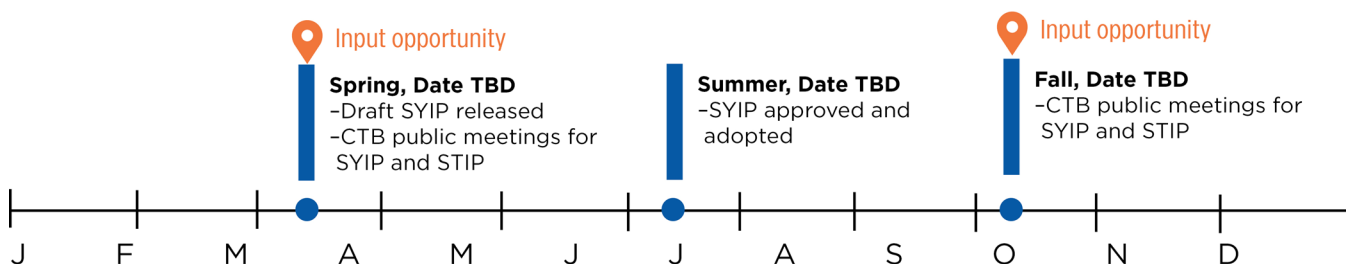
Candidate projects can be submitted for consideration through one of many funding program applications accessed through the SMART Portal. Individual projects are selected for funding and included in the updated SYIP, which is adopted by July 1 every year.

WHAT DOES THE SYIP DO?

The SYIP documents the programming of funding for interstate, primary, secondary and urban highway systems, public transit, ports and airports, and other programs for the immediate fiscal year (ending June 30) and identifies planned program funding for the next five fiscal years.

The SYIP includes projects funded through SMART SCALE and other means, including bridge, paving, safety, and other special federal and state programs. The SYIP also includes projects funded by others but administered by VDOT and DRPT.

IMPORTANT DATES



MORE INFORMATION:
<http://syip.virginia-dot.org>

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

A program of surface transportation projects that will use federal transportation funding, are regionally significant, or otherwise require approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA).



UPDATES: Every **3** years*



PROGRAM HORIZON: **4** yrs



WHO TO CONTACT:

District Planner, VDOT; Financial Programming Manager, DRPT (for transit)

a full STIP update, a project may be added to the STIP through the STIP amendment process, if it is approved for funding by the CTB and included in an approved SYIP.

The STIP is a dynamic program/document that changes as soon as it is approved by FHWA and FTA. The CTB processes anywhere from 12 to 26 STIP amendment packages each year, each containing anywhere from one to 40 projects.

How to get involved

The public involvement process for the STIP and SYIP happen concurrently (see timeline on p 9). In addition, during a full STIP update cycle, the Draft STIP is posted to VDOT's website for a minimum of 30 days for public review and comment.

*Though the federal government requires that the STIP be updated every four years. Virginia has chosen to update every three years.

WHAT DOES THE STIP DO?

The STIP is federally required. It contains all highway, passenger rail, freight, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects that are federally funded or expect to receive federal funds during the four-year STIP window. Also included are projects of regional significance and projects requiring FHWA or FTA approval, regardless of the funding source. A project must be in the STIP to receive federal authorization.

HOW DO PROJECTS GET INTO THE STIP?

The SYIP forms the basis for the STIP. Projects are added to the STIP based on project delivery schedules and approved funding as demonstrated in the SYIP. The full STIP is updated every three years. Outside



MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.virginiadot.org/about/stip.asp>

Rural Long-Range Transportation Plans



UPDATED: Local long-range comprehensive plans are reviewed at least once every five years and updated as needed by the locality and its PDC. Rural long-range transportation plans are updated as needed by VDOT.



PLANNING HORIZON: Varies



WHO TO CONTACT:
District Planner, VDOT

MORE INFORMATION:
https://www.virginiadot.org/info/local-state_plan_and_program_consistency.asp

Transit Development Plan (TDP)

All transit operators must prepare a transit development plan (TDP) in partnership with DRPT. Transit operators must submit a letter to DRPT annually describing progress on implementing the TDP and any significant changes as a requirement of any MERIT grant application (see p 13).



UPDATED: Every **5** years



PLANNING HORIZON: **10** yrs



WHO TO CONTACT:
Statewide Transit Planning Manager at DRPT

MORE INFORMATION:
<https://drpt.virginia.gov/guidelines-and-requirements/transit-development-plans/>

Study Funding Programs

Project Pipeline, Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) and Arterial Management Plans focus the Commonwealth's limited state planning/project development resources on priorities established by VTrans.



UPDATES: Project Pipeline, every other year; STARS, yearly; AMPs, yearly



WHO TO CONTACT: [OPI](#)

PROJECT PIPELINE

Project Pipeline is a performance-based planning program to identify cost-effective solutions to multimodal transportation needs in Virginia.

Through this planning process, projects and solutions may be considered for funding through SMART SCALE, revenue sharing, interstate funding, and other programs. Studies must align with Priority 1 and 2 locations established in VTrans.

STARS

STARS develops comprehensive, innovative transportation solutions to relieve **congestion bottlenecks** and solve critical traffic and safety challenges throughout the commonwealth. STARS are developed annually in coordination with planners, traffic engineers, safety engineers, roadway design engineers and maintenance specialists and local stakeholders. Studies must align with a VTrans congestion need or have documented safety needs

ARTERIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Arterial Management Plans preserve and enhance the safety and capacity of the **arterial network**. Safety, preservation and enhancement strategies serve as an alternative to roadway widenings. These plans are voluntarily developed annually in partnership with localities to support future land use and development. Studies must be on the Arterial Preservation Network.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL STUDY ENTAIL?

- Conducting broad analysis to understand underlying problems and causes
- Developing a range of possible alternatives to improve performance
- Engaging stakeholders/the public and obtaining feedback
- Doing a sketch-level analysis to narrow options, followed by detailed analysis
- Developing planning-level cost estimates and identifying preferred alternatives
- Refining investment strategy to understand risks and estimate costs
- Finalizing a multimodal investment strategy/deliverables

HOW DO I SUBMIT A PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION?

The non-metropolitan officials should work with their VDOT District Planner to identify potential study locations. Study locations for STARS and AMPs are approved by VDOT while Project Pipeline studies are approved by the CTB.

MORE INFORMATION

Project Pipeline: <https://vapipeline.org>

STARS: <https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/stars.asp>

Arterial Management Plans: https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/arterial_management_plans.asp

State and Federal Funding Programs

Non-metropolitan agencies can apply for funding for studies, planning, design, and construction through a variety of programs.

Appalachian Regional Commission Local Access Road—Supports Appalachian Region projects that better link the region’s businesses, communities and residents to the Appalachian Development Highway System and other key parts of the region’s transportation network.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-programs.asp#ARC>

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)—Established to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-special-federal-programs.asp>

Forest Highway Program—Provides money for the improvement of Forest Highways: public roads owned by state or local agencies that serve the National Forest system, and are designated by the FHWA’s Federal Lands Highway Division (in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and VDOT) as Forest Highways.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-special-federal-programs-forest.asp>

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)—Structured and funded to identify and improve locations with high concentrations or risk of vehicle crashes that result in deaths or injuries and to implement strategies to attain Virginia’s [Toward Zero Deaths](#) vision.

http://www.virginiadot.org/business/ted_app_pro.asp

Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT)—A statewide grants program that provides financial assistance to support public transportation services throughout Virginia.

<https://www.drpt.virginia.gov/ongoing-grant-programs/merit/>

Local Access Road Program—Rural Rustic Roads—The Rural Rustic Road Program is a practical approach to paving Virginia’s low-volume roads. It aims to keep traditional rural lane ambiance, while improving the road surface within the current right-of-way.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-programs.asp#Rural%20Rustic>

Public Lands Highways—Discretionary program that provides funding for improvements to roads that are open to public travel and serve federal property such as National Forests, National Parks, nontaxable Indian lands, military installations, or other federal reservations.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-special-federal-programs-publiclands.asp>

Revenue-Sharing Program—Provides additional funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct, reconstruct, improve, or maintain their highway systems and for eligible non-metropolitan additions in certain counties.

https://www.virginiadot.org/local_assistance_division-revenue_sharing.asp

Scenic Byways—Supports projects on the Commonwealth’s byways— approximately 3,500 miles of roads and offer distinctive routes with archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic value.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-programs.asp#Scenic>

SMART SCALE—SMART SCALE is a statewide program that distributes funds based on candidate projects' effectiveness in helping the state achieve its transportation goals. Funding generally goes to projects in the last two years of the SYIP. SMART SCALE prioritizes projects for funding through the Construction District Grant (DGP) and High Priority Projects Programs (HPPP), per Virginia code.

<http://www.smartscale.org/>

State of Good Repair Program (SGR)—Funds from both federal and state sources are used to reconstruct and rehabilitate deteriorated pavements on the Interstate and Primary Systems, including Primary Extensions; and replace or rehabilitate structurally deficient bridges on all systems.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/state-of-good-repair/>

- **SGR Locally-owned Bridge Program:** https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local_assistance_division-funding_programs.asp#locally
- **SGR Pavement program:** https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local_assistance_division-funding_programs.asp
- **SGR Primary Extensions:** https://www.virginiadot.org/business/local_assistance_division-funding_programs.asp#high

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP)—Intended to help sponsors fund projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the transportation experience; focuses on providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other community improvements.

<http://www.virginiadot.org/business/prehancegrants.asp>

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” was signed into law. The IIJA provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

Contact your VDOT district representative or DRPT representative

for suggestions as to which funding program may be most appropriate for your project. Additional funding opportunities beyond those listed here may be available. (see p 15).

Other Ways to Participate

There are a variety of ways you can learn about and participate in the state transportation planning and programming process. Below are a few suggestions.

ONLINE RESEARCH

Learn more about VDOT processes and programs online: Visit www.virginiadot.org for links to corridor studies, the SYIP, the STIP, non-metropolitan regional long-range plans (as the RLRPs become available from the PDCs), a Board of Supervisors Manual, and other local assistance VDOT information.

Learn more about DRPT processes and programs online: www.drpt.virginia.gov provides links to information on transit and commuter assistance services, major public transportation projects, critical DRPT rail and public transportation programs, information on key DRPT contacts and the Online Grant Administration system (OLGA) for DRPT's grant programs and grantees.

Learn more about mid-term transportation needs, priority locations, flooding risk, and more online: Visit InteractVTrans (<https://vtrans.org/interactvtrans/map-explorer>) to view mid-term transportation needs and priority locations established per CTB policy, flood risk assessment, and other datasets.

Learn more about OIPI processes and programs: <https://oipi.virginia.gov/>

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Invite state officials to your meetings: Request VDOT and DRPT officials attend county board of supervisors meetings, and town or city council meetings/forums.

Set a meeting with a VDOT or DRPT staff member: VDOT and DRPT staff members are available to meet with local officials regarding transportation issues and projects in their respective jurisdictions.

CALL OR EMAIL US

Contact your local district office: VDOT district offices often have designated contacts for non-metropolitan agency support.

To reach someone in a VDOT construction district office, see VDOT region and contact information at <http://www.virginiadot.org/about/districts.asp> or call the VDOT main toll-free customer service number at 1-800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623).

Information for reaching key staff at DRPT is available at <https://drpt.virginia.gov/about-us/our-team> or by calling 804-786-4440.

Contact OIPI—Statewide Transportation Planning (STP) <https://vtrans.org/get-involved/contact-us>

Attend CTB Meetings: Visit <https://www.ctb.virginia.gov/> to see CTB meeting schedules and materials.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Provide input on Virginia's Non-metropolitan Agency Cooperation Process: At least once every five years, federal regulations require the Commonwealth to solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the cooperation process and any proposed changes. The request for input will be posted online, advertised on the [LAD Listserv](#), and disseminated to localities, VACO, and VML.

