

Each MPO has an approved, documented, and SAFETEA-LU required public involvement process that is used in support of developing their respective LRTPs and TIPs.

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program**

In order to receive federal funds, Federal legislation mandates that states adopt a specific process for selecting projects for implementation known as the STIP. The Maryland Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is a four to five-year, fiscally constrained, and prioritized set of transportation projects that is compiled from local and regional plans. STIP projects are selected through an annual development process. The Maryland STIP is financially constrained by the revenues reasonably expected to be available through the STIP's four-year funding period using year of expenditure dollars. In Maryland, all years of the STIP list projects and appropriate project groupings with specific funds identified for each fiscal year. Projects (or phases of projects) are listed only if full funding is anticipated to be available for the project (or appropriate project phase) within the time period established for its completion. All projects and funding details in the STIP have been scrutinized and approved by the Maryland General Assembly and by the Governor through the State's annual budget process. The STIP is comprised of three parts: the Executive Summary, the six TIPs, and the CTP.

## ■ **4.0 Maryland's STIP Development**

### **Process Overview**

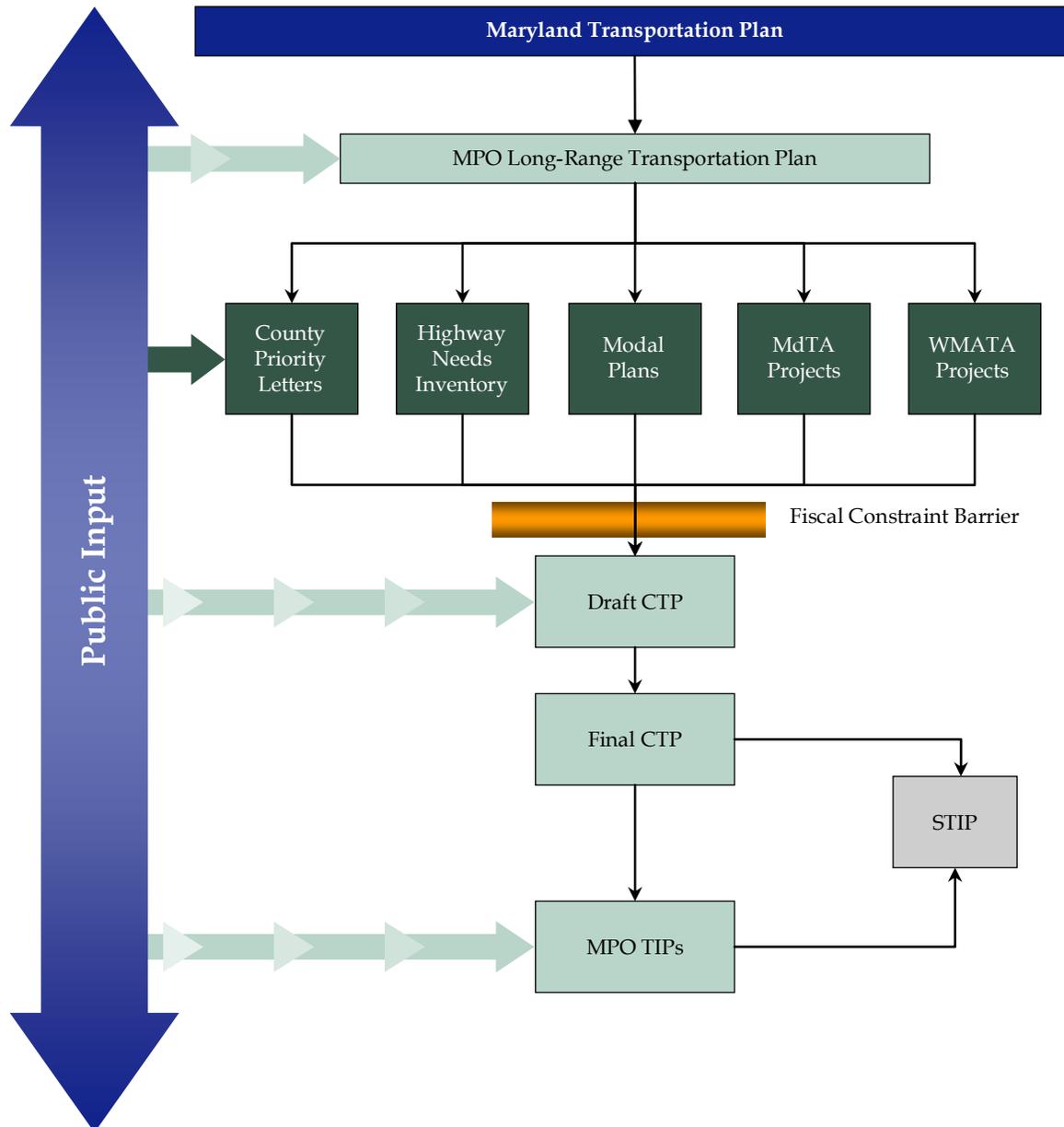
The STIP development process begins with the MTP and MPO LRTPs (see Figure 4.1). These long-range plans are the foundation for transportation planning in Maryland. The STIP components are identified through a cooperative process between MDOT, the Modal Administrations, SHA District Engineers, and county staff. MPOs conduct regular meetings to coordinate transportation planning efforts. The Highway Needs Inventory and Priority Letters contain specific project lists. The Annotated Code of Maryland Title 8, section 612(c) states:

“the local governing body and a majority of the local legislative delegation shall establish a list of priorities from among those secondary system projects listed in the needs inventory and the Administration shall engage in initial project planning upon the request of the local governing body and a majority of the local legislative delegation in the order established in the list of priorities.”

In other words, the Priority Letter represents each county's own internal ranking of projects deemed most important based on local need and local input. This is an effective way for counties to convey to MDOT the need for specific transportation projects and investments. Priority Letters involve requests for a wide variety of project funding – from transit improvements, highway reconstruction, and sidewalk construction to bridge improvements, bike path development, and highway safety projects. In some cases, counties reserve portions of their own funds in order to accelerate project implementation, conduct feasibility and planning studies, ensure that projects are kept on-track, and provide a funding match as required for certain types of projects. The modal share (highway, transit, etc.) of the projects listed in Priority Letters ranges from county to

county. In more heavily populated and densely developed counties, there is a stronger focus on public transportation and improving access to public transportation from roadway networks. Counties with smaller populations and lower densities tend to focus on highway and arterial improvements, although most counties request some element of transit funding.

**Figure 4.1 STIP Development Process**



Priority letters are typically received in the spring-summer as the draft CTP/STIP is developed. All recent priority letters can be found on the MDOT website: [http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/County\\_Priority\\_Letters/Index.html](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/County_Priority_Letters/Index.html). MDOT conducts several meetings with county staff, MPOs, and SHA district engineers to discuss

the priorities listed. At the end of the summer, MDOT meets with local officials at the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) conference to continue discussions about priority projects.

Once the official draft CTP/STIP is complete, MDOT conducts the Annual Consultation Process, also known as the Fall Tour where the Secretary of Transportation and the Modal Administrators visit each of the State's 23 counties and Baltimore City to present and solicit input on the draft CTP/STIP. In preparation for the Tour, MDOT conducts staff level meetings with each of the Counties and Baltimore City called the Pre-Tour to solicit staff input prior to the actual Tour. At the Tour itself, local elected officials, State legislators, and citizens are generally present at these meetings. Table 4.2 lists the 2009 CTP Fall Tour schedule. After the Fall Tour, MDOT reviews any comments and concerns and uses this input, along with updated revenue forecasts, to develop the final CTP/STIP.

**Table 4.2 CTP 2009 Fall Tour Annual Consultation Meetings**

2009 Date	County	Time	Location
September 17	Howard	7:00 pm	Ellicott City
September 22	Calvert	10:00 am	Prince Frederick
September 22	St. Mary's	3:00 pm	Leonardtown
September 25	Cecil	2:30 pm	Elkton
October 1	Washington	10:00 am	Hagerstown
	Allegany	3:00 pm	Cumberland
October 2	Garrett	10:00 am	Oakland
October 5	Anne Arundel	3:00 pm	Annapolis
October 15	Carroll	2:30 pm	Westminster
October 19	Baltimore County	10:30 am	Towson
October 20	Worcester	10:30 am	Snow Hill
	Somerset	2:30 am	Princess Anne
	Wicomico	7:00 pm	Salisbury
October 29	Frederick	7:00 pm	Frederick
November 2	Charles	10:00 am	LaPlata
November 3	Kent	9:30 am	Chestertown
November 4	Prince George's	2:00 pm	Greenbelt
November 5	Harford	2:00 pm	Bel Air
November 9	Baltimore City	3:00 pm	City Hall
November 10	Caroline	10:30 am	Denton
	Talbot	3:30 pm	Easton
	Dorchester	7:00 pm	Cambridge
November 12	Montgomery	7:00 pm	Rockville
November 24	Queen Anne's	1:30 pm	Centerville

MDOT also engages in a range of consultative activities with representatives of local agencies and elected officials from Maryland's non-metropolitan areas. In fact, a number of organizations and groups representing Maryland's rural counties and transportation interests regularly present before the General Assembly and Secretary of Transportation to communicate their needs and lobby for specific projects and funding initiatives, such as the Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM) – a Statewide advocate of public, private, and non-profit transit agencies. Other activities include SHA District Offices, where continuous relationships with local agencies and officials help to identify highway, transit, and other transportation capital needs for inclusion in the STIP and CTP. MDOT also attends Maryland Municipal League meetings and the Maryland Association of Counties meetings as another way to foster transportation planning coordination.

Once the final CTP has been developed after public input, it is submitted to the General Assembly for its approval. The final CTP is used in creating the MPO TIPs – all information is the same. Once the final CTP and each TIP have been approved, they are brought together into the current STIP. It should also be noted that the STIP also includes projects and plans of two independent agencies – MdTA and WMATA. Each of these authorities is eligible for Federal funding under Title 23 USC and Title 49 USC Chapter 53.

To further make the transportation planning process accessible to the public, MDOT makes the Maryland Transportation Plan, the CTP, and the STIP available online for the public's information and use at <http://www.mdot.state.md.us>. All MPOs also post their TIP online with other appropriate reports, studies, surveys, press releases, and pamphlets.

### **MDOT Planning Factors and Coordination**

In 23 CFR § 450.206 (a) federal guidelines require that each state carry out a continual, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide transportation planning process that provides for the consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services. Some examples of how MDOT has implemented these guidelines are detailed below.

#### ***System Preservation***

Keeping Maryland's transportation system safe and in good condition are top priorities of MDOT. For example, roads must be re-paved, safety improvements implemented, aging bridges rehabilitated, and buses and trains repaired and replaced. In the face of growing travel demand, increasing construction and equipment costs, limited resources, and ever-present needs for system expansion, MDOT must make the most efficient use of its existing system. To ensure the most productive use of the State's transportation system, asset maintenance and preservation are prioritized to extend the useful life of existing facilities and equipment in a fiscally responsible manner. MDOT seeks to maximize the value and performance of current resources in order to capture all of the benefits from the existing system before making new investments. Currently, system preservation accounts for 54% of MDOT's capital expenditures.

#### ***Safety and Security***

Ensuring the safety and security of Maryland residents and others who travel through the State's airports, seaports and on buses, highways and trains is vitally important. MDOT is committed to providing safe travel to all its customers and to protecting the safety of MDOT's workforce and contractors. Safety considerations are integral to all MDOT

design and operational activities. In addition, threats to the security of travelers and to transportation assets have received heightened attention and MDOT is committed to taking advantage of new technologies and cost effective counter-measures to reduce transportation system vulnerabilities. Each Modal Administration institutes both safety and security measures, with MDOT continuing to support these actions and strategies across the State transportation system.

The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is a statewide, coordinated, and strategic, traffic safety plan that provides the framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public streets and highways in Maryland. It establishes overall goals and objectives as well as strategies within key emphasis areas. The state currently is working toward updating and revising its 2006 – 2010 SHSP. The new plan will cover the years 2011 through 2015 and, with a concentrated effort to become even more strategic and focused, will reduce the number of emphasis areas/subareas from 14 to five.

When the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) led the development of a national strategic highway safety plan in 1997, Maryland was one of the few states in the country to rise to the challenge and develop its own multi-agency statewide plan in 1998. The passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provides states with a renewed opportunity to improve their strategic highway safety planning through a data-driven, comprehensive approach for all public roads with the buy-in and support of a wide variety of stakeholders.

The SHSP provides the framework for Maryland to apply the best solutions to solving its most critical highway safety problems. The continued active involvement of various stakeholders, along with the unwavering focus on the measurable objectives set forth in the SHSP, ensures broad support throughout the five-year life of the plan, promises effective implementation of the plan, and supplies guidance to reach the ultimate goal of saving lives.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Environmental Planning Factors***

Even though not Federally required at the project level, MDOT has made an effort to document environmental mitigation activities and provide information regarding environmental impacts at the project level. For example:

- SHA actively tracks the amount of wetlands and streams that are restored during and following each project where applicable;
- Each PIF in the CTP contains a section addressing the impact of the project in relation to Maryland's Smart Growth guidelines; and
- The AR contains a discussion about MDOT's environmental mitigation strategies and efforts.

In support of Governor O'Malley's Smart, Green and Growing Initiative, SHA has entered into a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Maryland

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.marylandroads.com/safety/oots/strategichwyplan.asp>

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The agencies are working together to plant one million trees across Maryland by 2011. This effort, funded by SHA through a Transportation Enhancement Program grant, completed the first spring plantings of approximately 152,000 trees, utilizing inmate labor. The trees comprise nearly 250 acres at eight State parks across the State.

Since 2000, MDOT has been engaged with other state agencies in initiatives aimed at the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Under “Chesapeake 2000” the formal agreement amongst the Bay states, MDOT committed to:

- coordinating its transportation policies and programs to reduce the dependence on automobiles by incorporating travel alternatives such as telework, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options, as appropriate, in the design of projects so as to increase the availability of alternative modes of travel as measured by increased use of those alternatives;
- considering the provisions of the Federal transportation statutes for opportunities to purchase easements to preserve resource lands adjacent to rights-of-way and special efforts for stormwater management on both new and rehabilitation projects; and
- establishing policies and incentives which encourage the use of clean vehicle and other transportation technologies that reduce emissions.

SHA further supports the Bay effort through its environmental stewardship projects, with the goal of restoring 200 acres of wetlands and 5 miles of streams by 2011; and by upgrading its septic systems to include Enhanced Nitrogen Removal technologies.

### ***Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan***

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects funded through FTA’s Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute – JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) Programs “must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This provision is aimed at improving transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and ensuring that communities are coordinating transportation resources provided through multiple Federal programs.

To respond to the new federal requirements, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is leading the development of a statewide plan and six regional Coordinated Transportation Plans. “These planning efforts will not only cover Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom Programs, but will also include the wide spectrum of services offered by Maryland’s locally operated transit systems and local human service providers. The Coordinated Transportation Plans will assess the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities and low income workers, develop strategies for addressing identified gaps and approving efficiencies of services, and prioritize specific strategies for implementation. In addition, these plans will identify potential organizations or structures to implement coordinated activities and potential new coordinated services.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kfhgroup.com/Background.htm>