

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 five-year funding period using year of expenditure dollars. In Maryland, all five 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 STIP Policy Documentation, the CTP, and the six TIPs. Maryland updates its STIP every year even though the Federal requirement is to update it every four years.

■ 4.0 Maryland's STIP Development

Process Overview

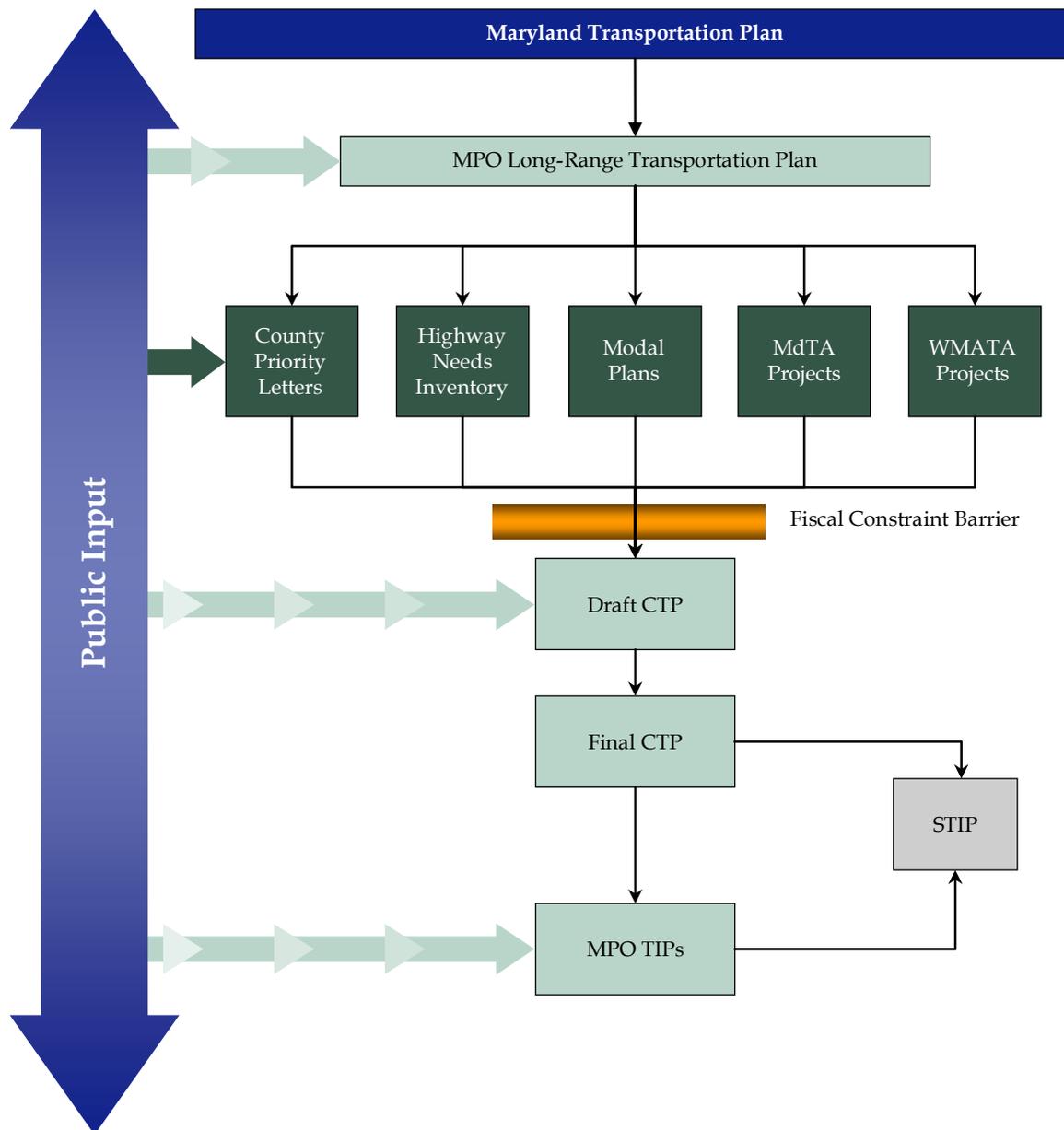
The STIP development process begins with the MTP and MPO LRTPs (see Figure 4.1). These long-range plans are the foundation for transportation planning in Maryland. The STIP components are identified through a cooperative process between MDOT, the Modal Administrations, SHA District Engineers, and county staff. MPOs conduct regular meetings to coordinate transportation planning efforts. 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 summer as the draft CTP/STIP is developed. 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. Local elected officials, State legislators, and citizens are generally present at these meetings. Table 4.2 lists the 2006 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.

Table 4.2 2006 CTP Fall Tour Annual Consultation Meetings

Date	County	Time	Location
September 25, 2006	Charles	9:30 am	Charles County Government Building, La Plata
September 26, 2006	Calvert	10:00 am	County Courthouse, Prince Frederick
	St. Mary's	3:00 p.m.	Governmental Center Leonardtown
October 5, 2006	Harford	2:00 p.m.	Harford County Council Chambers, Bel Air
October 10, 2006	Worcester	10:30 am	Worcester County Government Center, Snow Hill
	Somerset	2:30 p.m.	County Office Complex, Princess Anne
	Wicomico	7:00 p.m.	Wicomico Youth & Civic Center, Salisbury
October 11, 2006	Prince George's	10:00 am	SHA, District 3 Auditorium, Greenbelt
October 12, 2006	Washington	10:00 am	Washington County Admin. Building, Hagerstown
	Allegany	3:00 p.m.	Allegany County Office Complex Cumberland
October 13, 2006	Garrett	10:00 am	Commissioner's Meeting Room Oakland
October 16, 2006	Anne Arundel	3:00 p.m.	The Arundel Center, Annapolis
October 19, 2006	Howard	7:00 p.m.	George Howard Building, Ellicott City
October 23, 2006	Cecil	2:30 p.m.	County Administration Building, Elkton
October 24, 2006	Kent	9:30 am	County Government Center, Chesterstown
	Queen Anne's	1:30 p.m.	Liberty Building, Centreville
November 2, 2006	Montgomery	7:00 p.m.	Council Office Building, Rockville
November 8, 2006	Frederick	7:00 p.m.	Winchester Hall, Frederick
November 13, 2006	Baltimore Co.	10:30 am	Old Courthouse, Towson
	Baltimore City	3:00 p.m.	War Memorial Building, Baltimore
November 14, 2006	Caroline	10:30 am	Courthouse, Denton
	Talbot	3:30 p.m.	Library Meeting Room, Easton
	Dorchester	7:00 p.m.	County Office Building, Cambridge
November 15, 2006	Carroll	1:30 p.m.	County Office Building, Westminster

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 as another way to foster transportation planning coordination.

Once the final CTP has been developed, it is submitted to the General Assembly for its approval. The final CTP is also provided to the MPOs for use in creating their TIPs. Once the final CTP and each TIP has been approved, they are brought together unaltered 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 47% 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 comprehensive, traffic safety plan that provides the framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public streets and highways. It establishes overall goals and objectives as well as objectives and strategies within seven key emphasis areas. The SHSP is a working document designed to cover the years 2006 through 2010.

When the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) led the development of a strategic highway safety plan in 1997, Maryland was one of the few states in the country to rise to the challenge and develop their own multi-agency statewide plan in 2003. The passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provides states with an opportunity to improve their strategic highway safety plans (SHSP) 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 solve its most critical highway safety problems. The continued active involvement of two committees (the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee), along with the unwavering focus on the measurable objectives set forth in the SHSP, ensures top-down 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.²

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;

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

- 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.

Since 2000, MDOT has partnered with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) in order to minimize the negative effects of transportation on restoration efforts of the Chesapeake Bay. The goals of the “Chesapeake 2000 - The renewed Bay Agreement” listed on the DNR website include:

- 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.

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.”³

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