

■ 4.0 Maryland's STIP Development

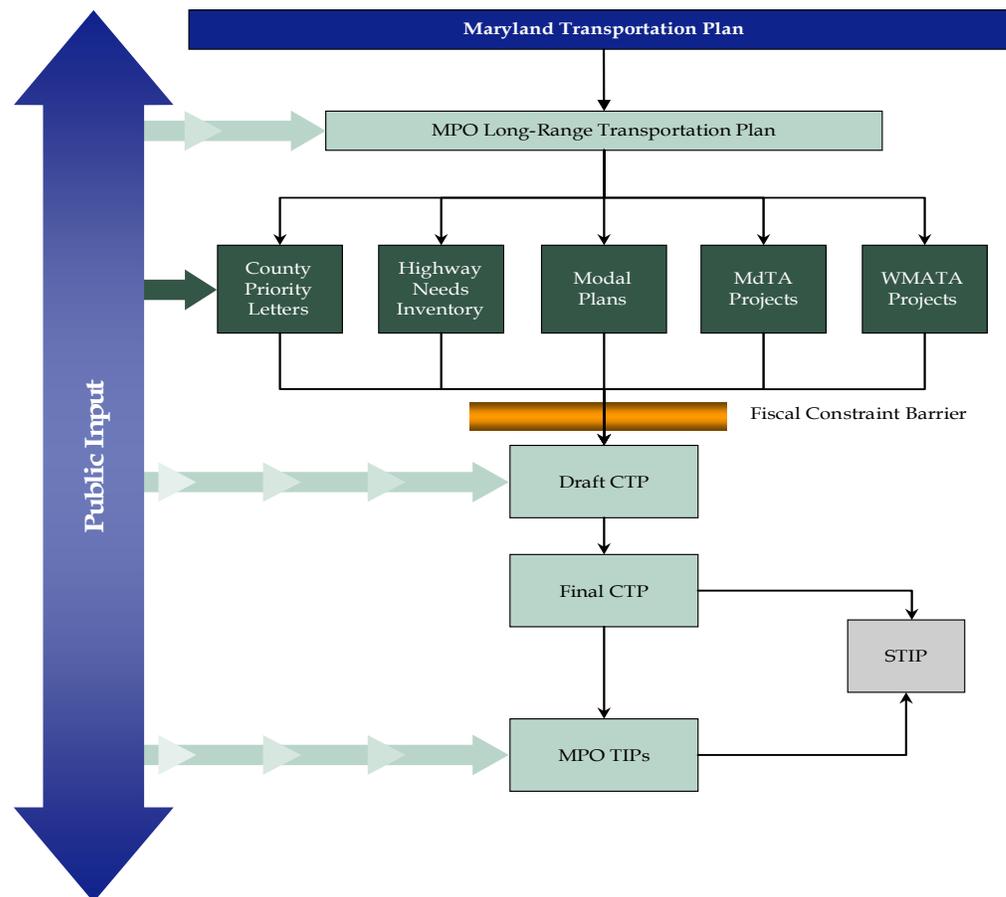
Process Overview

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 Transportation Business Units, 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/Office%20of%20Planning%20and%20Capital%20Program%20mining/County_Priority_Letters/Letters.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 Transportation Business Units' 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 2015 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 2016-2021 CTP - 2015 Fall Tour Annual Consultation Meetings

2015 Date	County	Time	Location
September 17, 2015	Cecil	10:00 a.m.	Elkton
September 17, 2015	Wicomico	7:00p.m.	Salisbury
September 18, 2015	Harford	3:00 p.m.	Bel Air
September 21, 2015	Anne Arundel	3:00 p.m.	Annapolis
September 22, 2015	Queen Anne's	2:00 p.m.	Centerville
September 22, 2015	Kent	6:00 p.m.	Chestertown
October 6, 2015	Caroline	11:00 a.m.	Denton
October 6, 2015	Talbot	4:00 p.m.	Easton
October 6, 2015	Dorchester	7:00 p.m.	Cambridge
October 8, 2015	Washington	10:00 a.m.	Hagerstown
October 8, 2015	Allegany	3:00 p.m.	Cumberland
October 9, 2015	Garrett	10:00 a.m.	Oakland
October 15, 2015	Carroll	2:00 p.m.	Westminster
October 15, 2015	Frederick	7:00 p.m.	Frederick
October 20, 2015	Calvert	10:30 a.m.	Prince Frederick
October 20, 2015	St. Mary's	1:30 p.m.	Leonardtown
October 20, 2015	Charles	6:00 p.m.	La Plata
October 22, 2015	Prince George's	2:00 p.m.	Greenbelt
October 22, 2015	Montgomery	7:00 p.m.	Rockville
October 23, 2015	Howard	7:00 p.m.	Laurel
October 29, 2015	Baltimore	1:30 p.m.	Towson
November 6, 2015	Baltimore City	1:30 p.m.	Baltimore
November 10, 2015	Worcester	10:30 a.m.	Snow Hill
November 10, 2015	Somerset	2:00 p.m.	Princess Anne

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 – 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. The Maryland Non-Metropolitan Consultation Process can be found here: http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Planning/STIP_TIP/Documents/MDOT_NonMetropolitanConsultativeProcessBrochure_1.pdf

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, which has all the same information. Once the final CTP and each TIP have been approved, they are brought together into the current STIP. The CTP is developed every year; however, the TIPs and the STIP are not necessarily updated every year.

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.

The public participation process for this Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and all of the Transportation Improvement Programs referenced by this document will also meet the Federal Transit Administration public participation requirements for the Maryland Transit Administration's Program of Projects.

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 is a top priority for 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 in FY 16 and 38.7% in FY 17.

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 Transportation Business Unit 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 SHSP has most recently been updated to cover years 2016-2020. The SHSP has incorporated the AASHTO/FHWA supported “Toward Zero Deaths” philosophy as its underlying principle. The Maryland Highway Safety Office is in complete concurrence with the “Toward Zero Deaths” initiative. This principle sets goals of reducing motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries by one-half by 2030, with an eventual goal to approach zero traffic deaths. The SHSP interim annual targets through the life of this particular SHSP are based on this methodology, but they have been revised since the 2011-2015 SHSP to take into account new guidelines in MAP-21.

The SHSP provides the data-driven 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.²

Environmental Planning Factors

Several changes occurred in recent years that served to revolutionize the management of environmental factors in constructing and maintaining our transportation system. Maryland law now requires that stormwater be managed through Environmental Site Design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable. This has caused transportation agencies to move away from large-scale practices such as ponds, and to instead incorporate numerous smaller, less engineered practices, such as sand filters and grassed swales, into the design of projects.

In December 2010, the EPA established a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of nutrients and sediment that may be discharged to the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. Under the TMDL, Maryland and its local governments have developed Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) that will guide our efforts to substantially reduce pollutants discharged from our facilities. As part of that effort, SHA developed a suite of best management practices to reduce the impacts of the system including:

- Pavement reduction
- Large scale tree planting in SHA rights-of-way
- Partnering with local governments to identify watershed-based wetland and stream restoration opportunities
- Enhancing existing and planned wetland and stream restoration efforts by integrating riparian buffer and tree plantings into site designs

² <http://www.marylandroads.com/index.aspx?pageid=240>

In support of State goals for Green House Gas (GHG) reduction and reduction of other emissions, MDOT has coordinated its transportation policies and programs to reduce dependence on automobiles by incorporating travel alternatives such as telework, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options, as appropriate, into the design of projects. To encourage the use of clean vehicles, MDOT has installed electric vehicle charging equipment at a number of MDOT facilities, including fourteen transit stations.

In addition to GHG reduction, MDOT is also planning for the resilience of the system as we respond to the growing impacts of climate change through vulnerability assessments and the incorporation of climate and sea level considerations into our planning processes and construction practices.

Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or "FAST Act" that maintained the changes implemented in The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The program changes in MAP-21 legislation included the repeal of the Section 5316 and 5317 Programs and the establishment of an enhanced Section 5310 Program that serves as a single formula program to support mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), MAP-21's predecessor, required 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." Under MAP-21 and FAST Act, this process continues to be a requirement for projects funded through FTA's Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities). 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.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) led the development of a statewide plan and five regional Coordinated Transportation Plans in October 2007. These plans were updated in 2010 and have just been updated again in 2015. All plans are in the process of being adopted by appropriate local bodies. These planning efforts not only pertain to Section 5310, but they also include the wide spectrum of services offered by Maryland's locally operated transit systems and local human service providers. The Coordinated Transportation Plans assessed the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and low income workers, developed strategies for addressing identified gaps and approving efficiencies of services, and prioritized specific strategies for implementation. In addition, these plans identified potential organizations or structures to implement coordinated activities and potential new coordinated services.