



2026 NON-METROPOLITAN AREA CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

The Maryland Non-Metropolitan Area Consultative Process

In accordance with federal law, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) must have a process in place for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials that provides an opportunity for them to participate in the development of the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), per [23 U.S. Code \(USC\) Section 135](#). A non-metropolitan area is any jurisdiction that is not represented by a federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as determined by the US Census. At least once every five years, the State of Maryland solicits comments from non-metropolitan local officials regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process and reviews any proposed changes. This process was last undertaken in 2021.



THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS

Because not all areas in Maryland are served by an MPO, MDOT uses this process to:

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



THE NEED FOR THIS BOOKLET

- MDOT is federally required to document the State's consultation process for the MTP and the STIP. The STIP contains all of the projects in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) that are regionally significant or will be implemented using federal funding.
- MDOT must have a process for cooperating with non-metropolitan local officials that is separate and discrete from the STIP and MTP, as defined in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. (49 U.S.C. 5304)
- This booklet documents how and when you can participate in the State's transportation planning process.

The 2050 Maryland Transportation Plan

The 2050 MTP, which was last updated and finalized in 2024, sets a long-range course for investing in the State's transportation system that will help ensure Maryland remains a great place to live, work, and do business. By statute, it is updated at least every five years with input requested from local elected officials, the General Assembly, citizens, businesses, government agencies, and community leaders.

2050 MTP GOALS



Figure 2: Graphic showing the 2050 MTP Action Plan Goals with Icons

The Maryland Non-Metropolitan Area Consultative Process

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MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The MTP sets a long-range course for investing in the State's transportation system that will help ensure Maryland remains a great place to live, work, and do business. The MTP is updated at least every five years. Input is requested from local elected officials, the general assembly, citizens, businesses, government agencies, and community leaders.

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STAFF COORDINATION

The following organizations, technical advisory groups, and program staff help to inform changes to the Non-Metropolitan Consultative Process.

- › State Coordinating Committee for Health and Human Service Transportation
- › Transportation Association of Maryland
- › State Highway Administration Districts
- › Regional Planning Coordination & Technical Assistance
- › Highway Needs Inventory
- › Locally Operated Transit Systems
- › Rural Transportation Assistance Program

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ELECTED OFFICIAL COORDINATION

Maryland Association of Counties and Maryland Municipal League

These two organizations meet annually and provide both formal and informal opportunities for local elected officials and county representatives in the State to share and discuss transportation needs.

Transportation Priority Letter

State and local elected officials are encouraged to reach consensus on local priorities for the highway and transit systems, as well as transit-oriented development sites, and to document these priorities annually in a letter to the MDOT Secretary. The priorities become candidates for funding and inclusion in the CTP. For those projects being proposed for construction funding, the request must also contain how the project helps attain one or more of the MTP goals.

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ANNUAL CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM TOUR

Each fall, the Secretary of Transportation and MDOT's modal administrations visit each of the State's 23 counties and Baltimore City to present on the draft CTP and solicit input from local elected officials, state legislators, and citizens on the draft program. Information obtained at these meetings is used in the development of the final CTP that is presented to the General Assembly for approval each year on the third Wednesday of January.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Engaged at every stage of transportation planning, citizens share input on the process as well through review and comment periods for County Transportation Priorities, Locally Operated Transit Systems public meetings, SHA project public meetings, local comprehensive plan development, and communications with elected officials and various stakeholder groups.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is Maryland's federally required program of transportation projects based on the State's long-range transportation plan. The public involvement for the STIP occurs at the State, local, and regional levels. The final STIP goes through several series of public comment phases before its final submission to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for approval. The final program document is jointly reviewed by the

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The STIP contains all of the projects in the CTP that are regionally significant or will be implemented using federal funding.

The Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) is MDOT's six-year capital investment program for transportation, which is presented annually by the Governor and approved by the Maryland General Assembly. MDOT works together with residents, businesses, local jurisdictions, and local and State elected officials to include capital projects in the CTP that are generally new, expanded, or significantly improved facilities or services that may involve planning, environmental studies, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, or the purchase of essential equipment related to the facility or service. ([MD Code, Transportation, § 8-612](#))

Transportation Planning and Coordination Process

The following items are ways in which MDOT and its modal administrations coordinate on transportation planning with both rural and metropolitan areas around the State, beginning at the staff level. These consultation activities can occur daily, weekly, or monthly and help to ensure that working relationships are established and maintained as we continue to collaborate on transportation ideas and solutions. This coordination ensures that these activities occur at both the staff and executive levels.

STATE COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION

A steering committee appointed by the Governor that examines and plans for the transportation needs of the elderly, the disabled, and those who need affordable transportation. The committee also serves as a clearinghouse for transportation issues, while participating in, and planning for, the allocation of human services transportation resources for emergency evacuations.

THE TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND (TAM)

The TAM is a statewide advocacy organization of public, private, and non-profit transit providers committed to improving mobility for Marylanders. TAM provides a variety of outreach efforts and also meets annually with General Assembly members. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is a principal member of TAM and participates in various training, education, and professional-development programs.

STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (SHA) DISTRICTS

The State's 23 counties are grouped into seven SHA Districts for construction and maintenance functions. A district engineer leads each office and maintains very close contact with local elected officials and county representatives. Each district office also has maintenance, traffic, and construction engineers assigned to each county.



REGIONAL PLANNING COORDINATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

MDOT's Office of Planning, Programming, and Project Delivery (OPPPD) in cooperation with SHA, MTA, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) provides multimodal planning and coordination expertise and assistance in both the metropolitan and the rural areas across the State.

HIGHWAY NEEDS INVENTORY (HNI)

SHA maintains a financially unconstrained and unfunded list of highway needs for each county. This list is updated on a three-year cycle for each county in consultation with county representatives.

LOCALLY OPERATED TRANSIT SYSTEMS (LOTS)

MTA provides technical and financial assistance to Locally Operated Transit Systems in each jurisdiction of the State. MTA works with each of the local transit systems to develop and fund annual projects and services.

RURAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RTAP)

MTA administers this FTA program, which is designed to provide training and technical assistance to transit operators in non-urbanized areas. Through the RTAP program, MTA provides scholarships for out-of-state training and publishes quarterly newsletters, as well as hosts in-state group training sessions. MTA works closely with FTA and TAM to develop RTAP sponsored activities.

Elected Official Coordination

The following activities outline more formal consultation opportunities with local and State elected officials and are required by law.

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (MACo) AND MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Through advocacy, education, and collaboration, both MACo and MML serve as non-profit organizations with the goal of promoting efficient and effective government. MACo represents all of Maryland's 23 counties, and Baltimore City, while MML includes 160 local government representatives from across the State.

These two organizations meet annually and provide both formal and informal opportunities for local elected officials and county representatives in the State to share and discuss transportation needs.

TRANSPORTATION PRIORITY LETTER

State and local elected officials are encouraged to reach consensus on local priorities for the highway and transit systems, as well as transit-oriented development sites, and to document these priorities annually in a letter to the MDOT Secretary by April 1. Priority letters can be submitted traditionally or through MDOT's [Online Form](#). The priorities become candidates for funding and inclusion in the CTP. For those projects being proposed for construction funding, the request must also contain an explanation of how the project helps attain one or more of the MTP goals.

ANNUAL CTP TOUR

Each fall, the Secretary of Transportation and MDOT's modal administrations visit each of the State's 23 counties and Baltimore City to present on the Draft CTP and solicit



input from local elected officials, State legislators, and citizens. Information obtained at these meetings is used in the development of the final CTP that is presented to the General Assembly for approval at the beginning of the 90-day legislative session in January.

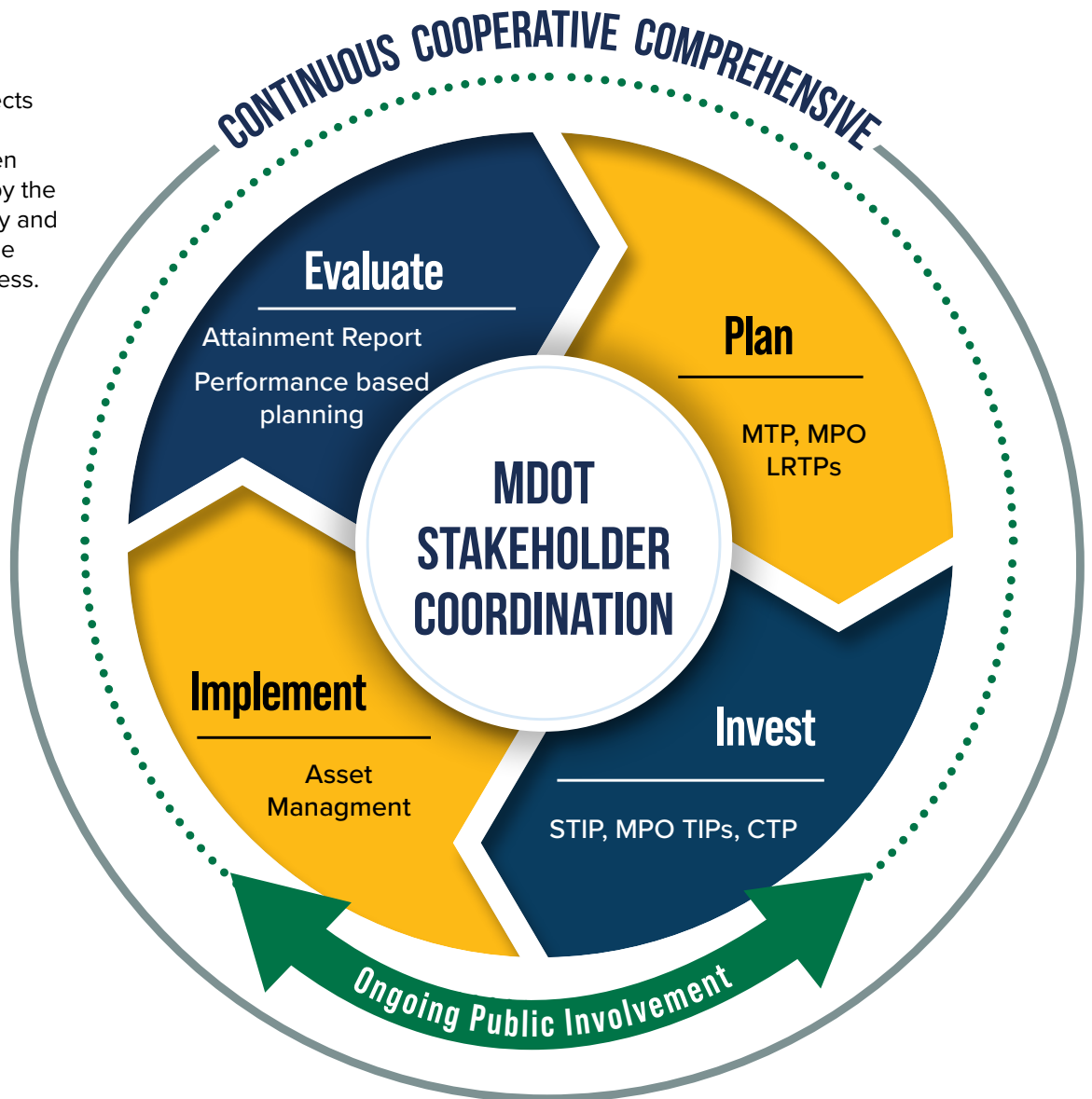
MARYLAND STATUTES FOR COORDINATING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

There are a number of provisions that require MDOT to coordinate transportation planning and programming activities with local governments. The following sections can be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland's Transportation Article, which outlines key statutory requirements governing the roles and responsibilities of various State and local entities in transportation planning and programming functions.

- › Sections 7-301 through 7-304: The Mass Transit, Transit Plans, and Financing section describes the process for coordinating transit plans with the local governing body, local legislative delegation, State agencies, and private carriers.
- › Sections 8-610 through 8-613.1: The Highways and Long-Range Highway Programs section describes the process for coordinating highway plans and programs with the local governing body, local legislative delegation, and municipalities.
- › Section 2-103.1: This section requires MDOT and other entities seeking project funding to demonstrate the relationship between prioritized projects and long-term goals of the MTP.

THE FINAL PRODUCTS

The CTP and [STIP](#). All projects and funding details in the CTP and the STIP have been scrutinized and approved by the Maryland General Assembly and by the Governor through the State's annual budget process.





MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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This document is available in alternative formats upon request.
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