

**Comments of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
To the Transportation Planning Board
On the draft 2014 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan**

As noted in comments earlier this year, the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance continues to be disappointed in the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) inability to focus and act as a forum for the identification of transportation investments of greatest regional significance.

The most recent example is the TPB's *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* that contains no actual project-specific priorities. What started out as the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee recommendation for a *regional* priorities plan, ended up as a compilation of transportation "strategies" for *local* and *state* governments to "consider" when making transportation decisions. In other words business as usual.

Developing priorities for the region requires taking a top down approach to identifying strategic investments for the region. While the draft 2014 CLRP is said to contain "more than 300 regionally significant improvements to the Washington region's highway and transit system through 2040", many of the projects considered of "greatest regional significance" are more local in nature.

As the region's planning body, the TPB should be looking at the bigger picture – identifying those investments that will move the greatest number of people, reduce travel time, and increase reliability of the network region-wide – and produce the best long-term return on investment.

The draft 2014 CLRP identifies approximately \$42 billion for new construction and identifies such projects as Arlington Street Cars, Corridor Cities Transitway, DC Street Cars, Governor Nice/US 301 Bridge reconstruction and development of the Purple Line as potential projects to fund.

If a major percentage of these funds were directed to projects of greatest regional significance, the region could fund 8-car Metro trains, upgrade the American Legion Bridge and the western side of the Maryland Beltway, build a new Potomac River crossing upstream, expand highway and transit capacity on I-66 outside and inside the Beltway and build the Bi-County Parkway. By doing so the *regional* plan would be far more "*regionally* significant" and the *region's* transportation network far more efficient and less congested.

Rather than periodic updates that try to match projects to newly available funds, the TPB should re-examine and re-organize the entire CLRP, with future federal, state and new regional revenues committed to projects of greatest regional significance. Projects of local significance should be recognized as such funded by remaining available or new funds.

In short, it's time to fix the region's transportation framework and the TPB's efforts should be so focused.