

Alliance Comments Regarding the Projects Rated by the HB2 Prioritization Process
Presented to
The Commonwealth Transportation Board
Monday, May 2, 2016

As in the past the Alliance observes that the Six-Year Improvement Plan, as presented on VDOT's website, remains largely indecipherable, - it lacks any overview or any indication of what it achieves.

New projects or even the most significant projects are not identified. The extent to which regional mobility will be improved by the implementation of all of these projects is unaddressed. It is simply, 606 projects spread over 61 pages.

Among the projects listed, however, the Alliance believes those of greatest value include improvements to the I-66 and I-95/395 corridors.

The HB2 Process:

The Alliance believes investing statewide funds in the projects of greatest benefit until available funds are insufficient makes sense and that the three statewide projects judged this year to be of greatest significance -- I-66, I-64 and the I-95 Rappahannock bridge are spot on.

Regionally, combining Route 7 Phases 1&2 is a win-win. We believe that upgrading Route 7 faster and at lower cost, while positioning Northstar Blvd for future construction dollars when the project is ready is the right way to go.

Moving forward the Alliance's recommends the following:

- Congestion mitigation should be awarded more than 45 of 100 points.
- Construction costs and land use should be normalized statewide.
- Project costs should be adjusted by throughput.
 - Adjusting project benefits by cost only - elevates lower rated, lower cost projects and penalizes more costly projects that may move far more people.
- Local sponsorship data, created and validated largely by the localities, should undergo more extensive review for consistency and accuracy.
- A clearer statewide definition of economic development needs to be developed.

It is important to recognize that projects being reviewed are currently selected by local governments and evaluated against one another. What projects are missing and not being evaluated that might score higher? The Alliance suggests the State has a responsibility to help answer that question.

VDOT and the CTB are responsible for virtually all of Virginia's highway network. However, current policy, not law, limits the CTB to two project nominations per cycle. VDOT has none.

It makes no sense for the responsible entities to have no voice, because at the end of the day, the State, not localities or MPO's is the one that local governments and state legislators hold accountable.

In short, the HB 2 process needs to transition quickly to greater focus and programming of funds for transportation investments of greatest long term benefit so the SYIP may become less a collection of projects and more focused on giving Virginia - the 21st century transportation network it needs.