



Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance Statement On Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's FY 2017 Investment Program

June 9, 2016

With regional transportation needs far outstripping available regional transportation dollars, the Authority has a difficult job. That job is made more difficult by provisions inserted at the behest of area localities that distribute nearly one third of all regional dollars to local governments and require benefits be proportional by localities over time.

Of the 24 project applications for FY 2017 regional funding only two score higher than 50% for HB 599 congestion reduction; only 5 score higher than 40% in 2040.

Of those 24 projects the Alliance recommends:

- I-66/Route 28 Interchange Improvements
- Route 28 PWC line to Route 29
- Route 7 widening -- (Colvin Mill Road to Jarrett Drive/Dulles Toll Road)
- Metro Blue Line Power Upgrade
- Fairfax County Parkway Widening (Route 123 to Route 29)
- Potomac Yard Metrorail Station

Projects that most definitely should *not* receive regional dollars include the Falls Church bike share and East Falls Church Metro station, which rank dead last in congestion reduction. These projects also reflect the Alliance's concern that the Authority's quantitative scoring process exaggerates the value of projects that benefit relatively few people. Under HB 599 each scores 2.2 but when combined with the quantitative measures their scores approach 50.

There's no requirement to spend every available dollar every year. Prudence dictates investing now in several high ranking projects and holding funds in reserve until TransAction 2040 can rate more projects.

Bottom line: There's a lot of talk these days about Metro's stewardship. When completed in 2001, the original 103-mile Metrorail system was considered world class. Repeated warning of maintenance backlogs were ignored. Fifteen years later Metro is a mess.

During the next 15 years the Authority will have stewardship over 3-4 billion regional dollars. Its stewardship over this period will determine whether congestion on our regional network will be less or continue to lead the nation.

Previous Transaction plans have been largely collections of locally-nominated projects. For our region to be globally competitive, TransAction 2040 must be strategically-focused on solutions that best meet the most significant projected regional demands. All projects of great regional significance including the Bi-County and Tri-County Parkways, American Legion Bridge, new Potomac River crossing, regional express bus network must be evaluated.

Spreading around lots of money on lots of regionally insignificant projects is easy. Exercising the discipline to choose wisely and focus on projects of greatest regional significance is hard, but necessary. To paraphrase the recently departed Dos Equis Man, "Choose wisely, my friends."

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