

# SMART SCALE Round 3



## What is SMART SCALE and Why does it matter?

SMART SCALE is the transportation prioritization process that Virginia uses to determine which projects will be funded in the Six Year Improvement Program (\$780 million in Round 3 for FY2024-2025). It quantifies complex issues such as accessibility, economic development, environmental impact, safety, and congestion mitigation so that we can compare the benefits of transportation projects across the Commonwealth.

Despite the General Assembly expressly identifying congestion mitigation as the primary factor in Northern Virginia, small projects with little congestion mitigation benefit have been selected for funding. In contrast, Virginia's second largest jurisdiction received no funding for high congestion mitigation projects including I-95 & Route 1 improvements. Undervaluing congestion mitigation, it's clear that SMART SCALE is flawed in calculating a project's real value and significance to Northern Virginians.

## SMART SCALE Issues

### Issue #1 – Accurate Measurement

Projects are measured against the highest scoring project in each category. The Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel received a perfect 100 for Congestion Mitigation. The next highest Congestion Mitigation score was 12.

### Issue #2 – Land Use Benefit Factor

The Land Use Category is calculated in a way that directly benefits projects in dense areas: Job & Population Density x Walkability to Non-Work Destinations. This is the second highest category in Northern Virginia behind Congestion Mitigation.

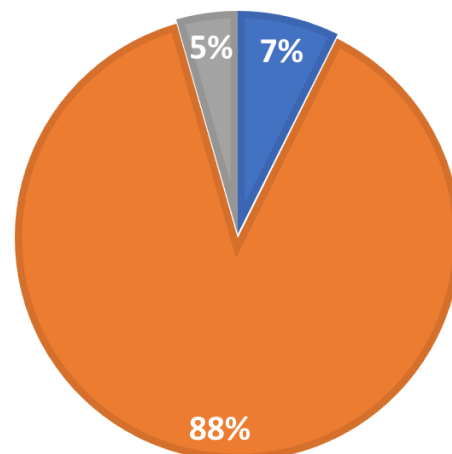
### Issue #3 – Cost Benefit Analysis

SMART SCALE distills five-six benefit categories into a number between 0 and 100, then divides that by the money requested. As a result, projects with small benefits and small costs score better than projects with big benefits and big costs.

### Northern Virginia - \$199 Million (Staff Recommendation)

**Alexandria** - \$71.4 million  
**Arlington** - \$59.5 million  
**Fairfax County** - \$50 million  
**Fairfax City** - \$14.8 million  
**Falls Church City** - \$2.8 million  
**Loudoun County** - \$1.3 million  
**Prince William County** - \$0

■ Highway ■ Transit ■ Bike/Pedestrian



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## Project Comparison

### **Pickett Trail Connector (Funded)**

**Cost:** \$ 6 million

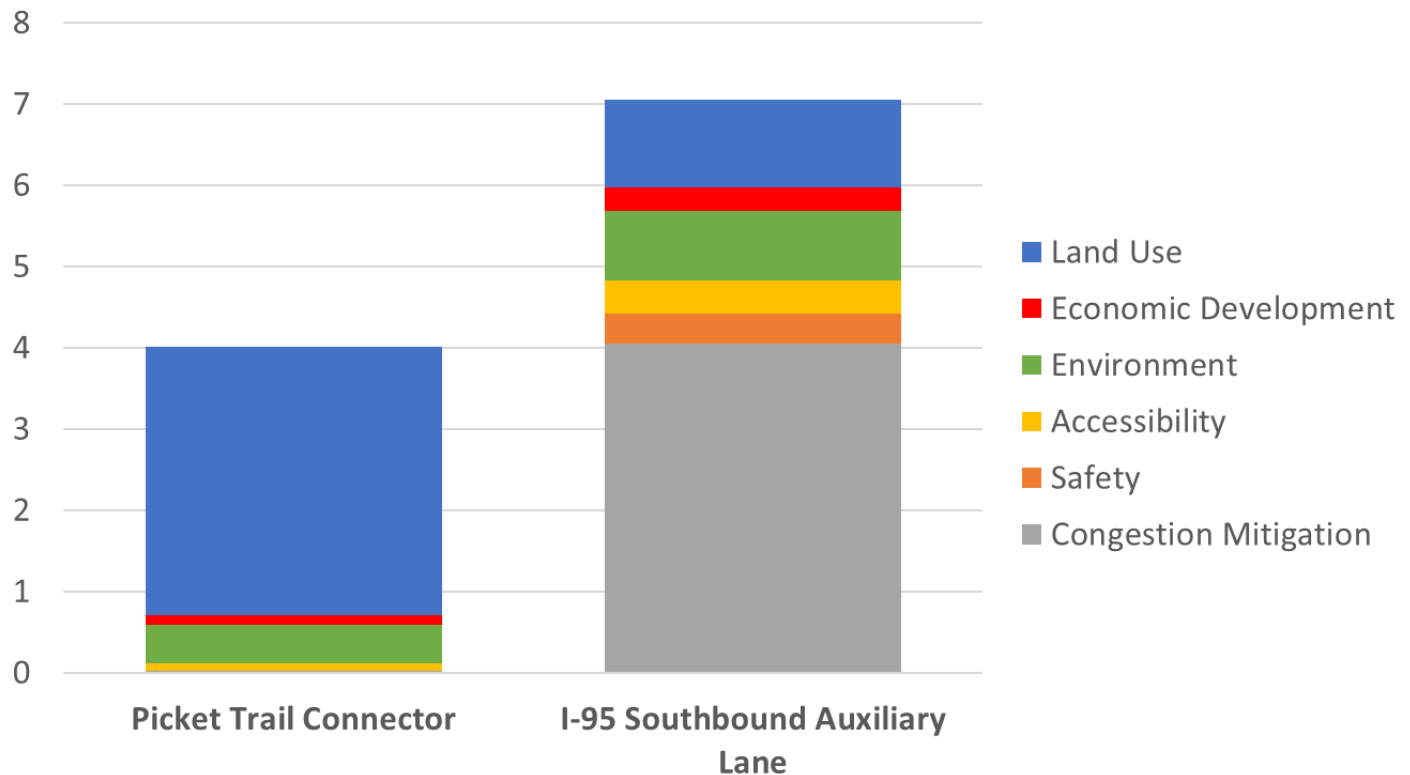
**Congestion Mitigated:** 32 people & 0 hours of delay

### **I-95 Southbound Auxiliary Lane (Not selected)**

\$ 25.7 million

3,554 people & 347 hours of delay

## **Total Benefit Score**



### Small Project Bias

90% of the recommended projects requested less than \$10 million.

They total \$287.6 million or 37% of the funding available.

## **Next Steps**

The Commonwealth Transportation Board is holding a SMART SCALE public hearing in Northern Virginia on **Monday, May 13th** at 6:00 pm.

Join the Alliance in support of projects that will do the most to relieve congestion, improve our quality of life, and increase economic prosperity for everyone in Northern Virginia.