

November 20, 2019

OIPI Deputy Director, Ronique Day
1221 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Concerns about Proposed Changes to SMART SCALE Eligibility and Scoring and to the Highway Safety Improvement Program

Dear Secretary Valentine and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board:

On behalf of the Alexandria Transportation Commission, I am writing to you and the Commonwealth Transportation Board to express concerns about proposed changes to the SMART SCALE and HSIP programs.

SMART SCALE is already a successful program that works. It has funded many transit and bicycle and pedestrian projects that lead to real congestion mitigation and safety and promote the region's environmental sustainability. By funding projects like the West End Transitway, access and safety enhancements, the CTB has taken steps to promote mobility options that reduce congestion and promote safety and the City's goal of Vision Zero of eliminating all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2028.

We urge the CTB above all to reject many of the proposed changes because they undermine the goals of SMART SCALE and VTRANS, and could actually lead to *more* traffic congestion. VDOT and the CTB need to slow down this process to minimize unintended consequences before adopting these changes. Because SMART SCALE has been so successful and already spends taxpayers' funds efficiently, the proposed changes would represent major policy shifts in the program without adequately considering potential impacts.

Some of the changes will negatively impact jurisdictions that are already dense and that want to invest in environmentally sustainable projects that move people, relieve congestion and improve safety. The SMART SCALE scenario test shows transit and bike/ped projects as the most negatively impacted by the proposed changes. In fact, these are exactly the types of projects that have shown the most benefit and should continue to be funded. The proposed changes will also make it more difficult to achieve Vision Zero and hurt communities that are burdened by regional traffic.

In addition, the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) has funded many important improvements at high crash locations. We urge the CTB not to ignore the needs of highways in urban areas like Route 1 and promote pedestrian and bicycle safety projects that have been shown to increase safety. These projects will make walking and biking safer and more convenient.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to SMART SCALE and HSIP.

Sincerely,

Steven Klejst
Chair
Alexandria Transportation Commission

Cc: Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria