

RRRC Rural Transportation Committee

Smart Scale Proposed Changes for Round 3

July 27, 2017

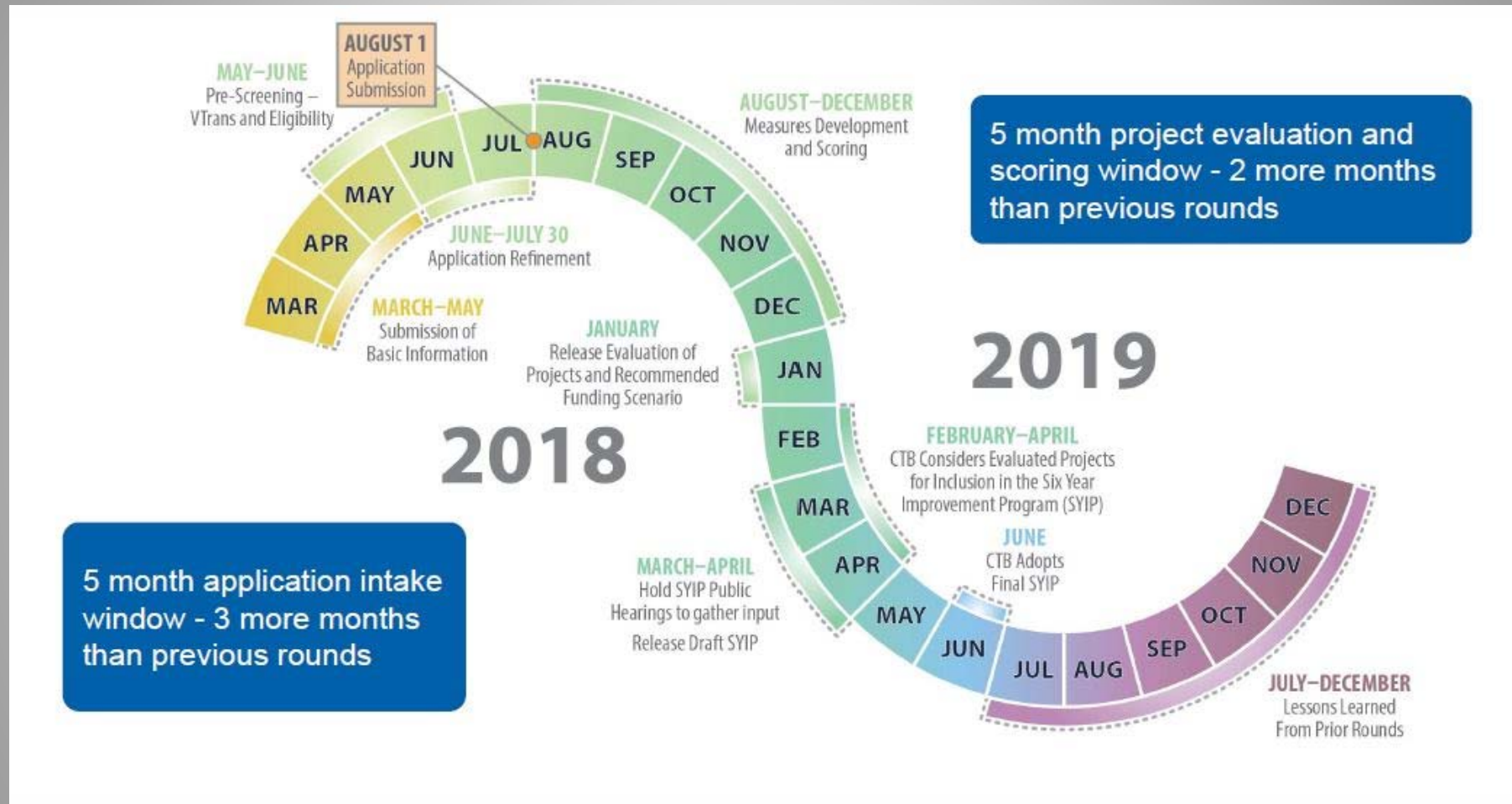


Overview

- Commonwealth Transportation Board held a retreat in June to review VDOT/Smart Scale staff recommendations for improving Smart Scale Round 3
- Follow up presentation at July CTB meeting with a few tweaks to what was presented in June
- Changes grouped into two categories
 - Procedural: Schedule, Number of applications per applicant, Project Eligibility, Project Readiness
 - Measures: Modifications to Scoring Methodology/Criteria

Recommended Procedural Changes

- Application Schedule



Recommended Procedural Changes

- Limit the # of applications per applicant with goal of reducing potential for infinite applications
- Two-tiered approach recommended in July

Tier	Localities	MPOs/PDCs/Transit Agencies	Maximum Number of Applications
1	Less than 200K	Less than 500K	4
2	Greater than 200K	Greater than 500K	8

- RRRC Staff comments: Would have impacted Fauquier County in Round Two; Potential workaround could be to utilize RRRC as applicant for applications exceeding maximum number in future application cycles

Recommended Changes for Project Eligibility

- Change #1: Designed to address projects submitted that were primarily asset replacement projects (traffic signals, bridges, etc.)
 - Proposed recommendation: *If a significant portion of the project costs are related to the repair or replacement of existing traffic control devices, structures or bridges, the project be excluded from consideration in scoring and rating for SMART SCALE.*
- RRRC staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects from the region. Would encourage more specificity on “significant portion of project costs.”

Recommended Changes for Project Eligibility

- Change #2: Designed to address projects submitted that were already fully funded with proffers/local funds
 - Examples were projects already funded, but seeking to gain Smart Scale funds to offset/reallocate those existing funds or project adding a smaller additional element such as bike/pedestrian leveraging fully-funded corridor widening project for benefit score
 - Proposed recommendation: *If an applicant submits an existing fully funded project with independent utility for Smart Scale funding with intention of requesting additional funds to add project features such as landscaping, streetscaping, and/or bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, then the benefits associated with the fully funded project elements should be excluded from consideration in scoring and rating the project for Smart Scale.*
- RRRC staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects from the region.

Recommended Changes to Project Eligibility

- Change #3: Designed to address projects submitted with elements that are not clearly related to each other
 - Examples are interchange/ramp projects with Park and Ride lots located > 2 miles from project location
 - Proposed recommendation: *Project features must be associated such that they are contiguous or of the same improvement type*
- RRRC staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects from the region.

Recommended Changes to Project Readiness

- Designed to include guidance on required level of planning and supporting documentation needed for major projects
 - Applies to grade separations, new traffic signals, new location facilities, major corridor widening, public support
- #1: Grade Separation on Limited Access facility will require Interchange Justification Report with preferred alternative
- #2: Grade Separation on At-Grade Intersection will require planning-level study and alternatives analysis
- #3: New Traffic Signals will require signal warrant and justification and evaluation of alternative intersections

Recommended Changes to Project Readiness

- #4: New Location must assess requirement for evaluation of multiple alternatives (NEPA/permitting)
- #5: Major widening projects must ensure that alternatives to optimize existing capacity were thoroughly evaluated as part of planning process
- #6: Local Resolution of Support must be submitted as part of application process
- RRRC Staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects; must ensure future projects are advancing into queue.

Recommended Changes to Project Measures - Safety

- Measures S.1 & S.2
- Existing criteria weights fatalities 18x greater than severe injuries
 - Issues arise due to the fact that vehicle age and age of occupants are major factors in determining crash results
- Recommending development of a 'blended' rate that reduces the difference in weighting between fatality and severe injury crashes
- Also recommend removing crashes that are result of DUI from consideration in scoring
- RRRC Staff comments: Impact highly dependent on project location.

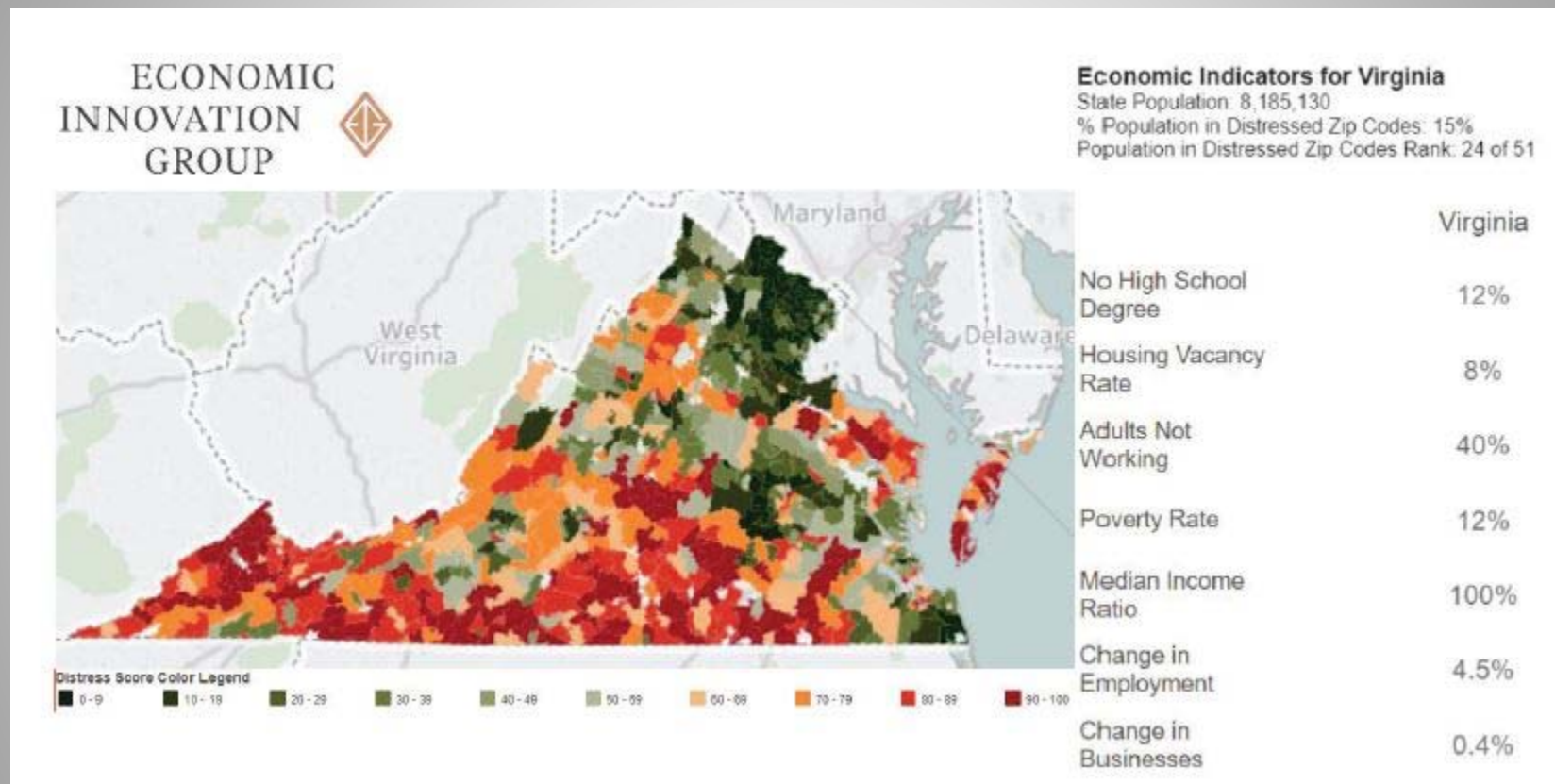
Recommended Changes to Project Measures - Congestion

- Measure C.1 - Person Throughput
- Existing criteria does not take into account distance of project
- Change would take into account Person Miles Traveled through the project area (5 mile project could receive 5x person throughput versus 1 mile project)
- RRRC Staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects since most were intersection, short segments. May provide some additional benefit for longer segment projects.

Recommended Changes to Project Measures – Economic Development

- Measure ED.1 – Project Support for Economic Development
 - Remove 0.5 points for *consistency* with local Comp. Plan and *consistency* with Regional Economic Development Strategy
 - Replace with *Transportation project specifically referenced in local comprehensive plan or regional economic development strategy*
 - *Addition of 0.5 point for project being located in economically distressed area*
 - *Zoned properties must get primary access from project*
 - *Reduce buffer to maximum of 3 miles for economic development sites (currently 5 miles)*
 - *Distinguish level of readiness for site plans*
- RRRC Staff comments: Economic Distress not likely to help region; Best scenario may be a sliding scale, rather than simple yes/no output

Recommended Changes to Project Measures – Economic Development



Recommended Changes to Project Measures – Economic Development

- Distinguish the level of readiness for site plans

Site Readiness	Points
Conceptual site plan submitted	0.5
Conceptual site plan approved	1
Detailed site plan submitted	2
Detailed site plan approved	4

Recommended Changes to Project Measures – Economic Development

- Measure ED.2 – Intermodal Access
 - Existing method does not take into account length of proposed improvement
 - Recommendation would scale points by multiplying freight tonnage by length of improvement
- RRRC Staff comments: Minimal impact on previously submitted projects.

Recommended Changes to Project Measures – Accessibility

- Measure A.1 – Access to Jobs
 - Existing method includes 45 minute cap for automobile job access and 60 minute cap for transit job access and also “grades on a curve”
 - Recommendation to eliminate 45 and 60 minutes caps
- RRRC Staff comments: Supportive of this change, as this was a request made from the region during the initial development of Smart Scale

Timeline for Proposed Changes

- July/August: Draft of Revised Policy Framework & Technical Guide available for review (not yet released)
- September: Outreach on Proposed Changes in conjunction with Fall Transportation meeting (date not yet set)
- October 23-24: Tentative date for CTB action on Smart Scale revisions at Governor's Transportation Conference

RRRC Staff Proposed Feedback Timeline

- Today: Consensus on initial response to changes as presented to CTB previously. Staff will draft formal comments and share with RTC for review.
- August 23: Regional Commission action on initial feedback
- September 28: RTC review of any further details
- Early October: Regional Commission submits any further comments

RRRC Staff Initial Response

- Support Jobs Access change
- Support Application Timeline change
- Support scaled measure for economic distress versus other measures
- Support clarifying project eligibility to make best use of limited smart scale funds without funding projects best served under other programs

Other Items for Discussion/Recommendation

- Cap on number of applications per applicant?
- Safety Measure changes?
- Other Economic Development measure changes?
- Previous discussion on move from Category C to Category D
 - VDOT/Smart Scale staff analysis found that “measures appear to have greater influence over whether a project is funded than weighting frameworks”