

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 900
Finance

(Senators Hershey and Colburn)

Department of Transportation - Highway Needs Inventory - Four-Lane Highways

This bill requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to include in the highway needs inventory a highway with two or more traffic lanes in each direction for any county that, on January 1, 2014, did not have a highway with two or more traffic lanes in each direction that fully bisects the county. SHA must engage in project planning for any such highway.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$9.0 million to \$15.0 million over a five-year period between FY 2015 and 2019 to conduct project planning on three projects; however, costs could be significantly higher to the extent additional counties are affected. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local governments in jurisdictions that are added to the inventory as a result of the bill may be asked by SHA to participate in the project planning process. Participation costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: SHA is required to provide information to the General Assembly and the Governor related to (1) current highway needs and (2) development of the *State Report on Transportation*, which includes the *Consolidated Transportation Program* (CTP) and the *Maryland Transportation Plan* (MTP).

Highway Needs Inventory

Every two years, SHA must assess the highway conditions and transportation needs of the State and using that information, SHA must prepare proposed modifications to the highway needs inventory that it considers necessary. To prepare the proposed modifications, SHA must provide a copy of the proposal to and consult with any appropriate local governing body, municipality, and local legislative delegation with respect to the proposed modifications.

SHA is authorized to engage in project planning for any item in the current highway needs inventory and may request the funds required to implement project planning in its annual budget. SHA must conduct studies to determine, among other things, the scale, location, environmental impact, and citizen reaction to items in the needs inventory. During project planning, SHA must consult with any appropriate local governing body, municipality, and local legislative delegation.

Consolidated Transportation Program

The CTP is the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) six-year budget for the construction, development, and evaluation of transportation capital projects. It is revised annually to reflect updated information and changing priorities. It contains a list of current and anticipated major and minor capital projects for the fiscal year it is issued and for the next five fiscal years, including an expanded description of major capital projects; a detailed breakdown of the costs of a project, project expenditures to date, expected expenditures for the current fiscal year, projected annual expenditures for the next five years, and total project costs; and MDOT's estimates of the source (*i.e.*, federal funds, special funds, etc.) and amount of revenues required to fund projects in the CTP. The CTP also must contain updates on subjects such as bicycle and pedestrian transportation and technology spending.

Maryland Transportation Plan

The MTP is a 20-year forecast of State transportation needs based on MDOT's anticipated financial resources during that 20-year period. It must be revised every five years through an inclusive public participation process. Furthermore, it must be expressed in terms of goals and objectives and include a summary of the types of projects and programs that are proposed to accomplish the goals and objectives, using a multimodal approach when feasible. The latest MTP was released in January 2009 and the next update is expected in 2014.

State Expenditures: SHA advises that the bill primarily impacts counties on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland, and that at least three projects must be included in the highway needs inventory as a result of the bill:

- In St. Mary’s County, MD 5 needs to be upgraded to two lanes in each direction from Point Lookout to MD 235. MD 235 also needs to be upgraded to two lanes in each direction from MD 5 to Wheeler Road.
- In Worcester County, US 113 south of MD 50 needs to be upgraded to two or more lanes in each direction to MD 394 or US 113 Business north of Snow Hill.
- In Caroline County, other than MD 404 within Denton, no other State road in Caroline County has two or more lanes in each direction, so a needs assessment must be conducted to determine which roadway(s) should be upgraded.

Generally, planning for projects in the highway needs inventory is conducted close to the time of construction and requires between \$3.0 million and \$5.0 million per project. Each study takes place over a period of two to five years. As such, TTF expenditures increase by \$9.0 million to \$15.0 million over a five-year period between fiscal 2015 and 2019 to work through the project planning process for the three jurisdictions identified above. However, SHA advises that, depending on how the term “bisect” is interpreted, there could be additional counties impacted by the bill. Thus, costs could be significantly higher. For example, Carroll and Kent counties each have four-lane highways that may not be considered to bisect their respective counties. For each additional project that is affected by the bill, TTF expenditures increase by an additional \$3.0 million to \$5.0 million.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Harford, Montgomery, and Wicomico counties; Baltimore City; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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