



Hon. Guy Guzzone
Chairman
Senate, Budget and Taxation Committee

RE: SB62 — Transportation - Consolidated Transportation Program - Prioritization (Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2026)

Position: Favorable with Amendments

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies Maryland (ACEC/MD), we are favorable with amendments on SB62. ACEC/MD represents Maryland's private-sector engineering firms that design and deliver the transportation, water, environmental, and public works infrastructure that local governments and the State rely upon every day. Our members are deeply invested in stable, predictable transportation funding because it drives capital planning, project readiness, and delivery performance and economic growth across Maryland.

Our member firms employ thousands of Marylanders and help deliver the multibillion-dollar capital program reflected in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) each year. Predictable, data-driven transportation funding is critical to long-range capital planning, project readiness, and delivering projects on time and on budget. We support the intent of this bill, with some amendments to increase flexibility and clarity.

Intent of the Bill - SB 62 seeks to establish a project-based scoring system tied to State transportation policy goals, regular two-year funding cycles for new requests, and public release of project scores alongside the draft CTP. The bill also strengthens the role of the Maryland Transportation Commission in reviewing scores and recommendations, moving Maryland toward a more transparent, technically grounded, and understandable capital programming process. **We appreciate the bill's intent** to modernize and clarify how transportation projects are evaluated and selected for inclusion in the CTP; however, we have several concerns that we would like to see addressed.

Allow the Pilot Program to Run its Course and Publicize Findings - The Department of Transportation has already secured a 2.0 million federal Prioritization Process Pilot Program grant to develop improved project selection tools and analytics. We recommend that the Department allow this pilot to run its course, and that MDOT to publicly share its methodologies and findings and use those results to inform final decisions on scoring metrics, data inputs, and implementation schedules before formally locking a statewide system into statute. Adding language to this bill to allow flexibility, even if it passes as written, is important.

Provide More Clarity on Performance Metrics and Weights - The bill should more clearly describe how performance metrics and weights will be established, calibrated over time, and updated to reflect new data and changing conditions across modes and regions. We recommend clarifying in statute or legislative intent that congestion relief and safety are primary factors in scoring and requiring MDOT to document mode-specific metrics (e.g., highway, transit, freight, bicycle and pedestrian) so that a "one-size-fits-all" bias does not disadvantage certain project



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types or geographies. The Department has graciously shared some of this information with us; however, much more robust conversations are needed to fully understand the updated goals.

Provide More Clarity on Impacts to Current CTP Process - We would like clarification on how project scores will interact with local priority letters, long-range transportation plans, and the Secretary's ultimate funding decisions. We would like MDOT to explain how non-score factors, such as project readiness, risk, cost escalation, and statutory or federal mandates will be documented and considered when they affect outcomes, so that local governments and project sponsors understand how existing planning processes continue to matter.

Provide More Clarity on Impacts to Project Timelines - To avoid unnecessary delays during the transition to the new framework, we recommend that SB 62 require MDOT to establish a clear, timely process for sharing draft scores and input data with project sponsors before scores are finalized. This process should include timelines for data verification and correction, explanations of scoring results, and assurances that projects already in advanced stages of development are not held up solely due to implementation of the new system.

Allow for Distinct Approvals of Design Funding in Advance of Construction Funding - A technically sound scoring and funding system should recognize the full project lifecycle, including planning, environmental review, and design prior to construction. We recommend clarifying that the CTP may approve and program design funding in advance of construction funding, so the State can maintain a predictable pipeline of "shovel-ready" projects, better manage construction inflation, and avoid the cost premiums associated with stop-and-start funding.

Create Separated Prioritization Systems Based upon Transportation Mode - In the longer term, we believe Maryland should adopt distinct prioritization systems that score projects against other projects within their specific mode (highway, transit, freight, bicycle and pedestrian, etc.), rather than forcing all projects into a single cross-modal ranking. While we recognize that fully separating prioritization systems by mode may be a future policy discussion, we encourage MDOT to evaluate and report on mode-specific scoring approaches as the pilot and initial implementation phases progress.

ACEC/MD and its member firms are committed to working closely with the Department and the bill sponsors as SB 62 moves forward to refine the technical details of the scoring methodology and implementation schedule. Our goal is a framework that is workable in practice, equitable across modes and regions, and aligned with Maryland's long-term transportation, economic, and climate objectives. For these reasons, we respectfully request a **Favorable with Amendments** report on SB 62

Respectfully,

Maria K. Donovan

Maria Donovan
Executive Director
ACEC/MD