

Chapter 7: Paying for the Transportation Plan

A plan without a means of paying for it is really just a “wish list.” In the past, too many plans were prepared in this fashion. TEA-21 recognized this shortcoming by requiring fiscal constraints to be applied to the transportation plan of each metropolitan area. The Dover/Kent County Long Range Transportation Plan has been crafted to meet the diverse transportation needs of the region within a conservative budget estimate. This means that elements of the Plan are adopted on the evidence that funding will be “reasonably available.”

The requirement was not intended to have MPO’s create long-range capital and operating budgets with their long-range plans. Such budgets are done in another part of the metropolitan planning process: the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Dover/Kent County MPO TIP is prepared annually, and per TEA-21 metropolitan planning requirements, it is a financially constrained document. Because the TIP programs projects for actual implementation within a three-year time horizon, if the funds are not available, then the projects cannot be implemented. The intent of TEA-21 was that the measure of financial constraint for the near-term TIP to be much more exact than the measure of financial reasonableness for the long-term, twenty-five year metropolitan transportation plan.

Availability of Funding

Estimating the amount of funds that will be available years into the future is not an easy task. Shifting of priorities at the federal level and the changing needs, desires, and opinions of the traveling public complicate the task. However, historical trends and transportation investment allocations to the region were used to develop a reasonable estimate.

Based upon an analysis of historic funding levels in the MPO planning area, \$1.615 billion should be available to implement this plan during its life. This estimate considers historical levels of funding in the Capital Transportation Program (CTP) through 2006 and assumes that 12 percent of all funding sources are available for the Dover/Kent County MPO region. The base funding level is then increased by two percent annually. The calculation also assumes that 25 to 35 percent of the facility upgrade improvements will be funded through developer contributions or improvements, since development will be driving the need for the upgrades.

Cost of Proposed Transportation Improvements

Estimating the level of funding expected to be “reasonably available” is only half of the budgeting process. One must also estimate the cost of the expected improvements. Since this is a Long Range Transportation Plan, cost estimates for implementing, operating and maintaining the new facilities and services in the plan are developed at a sketch level. Unit costs for new or expanded facilities and maintenance of those facilities are based on average costs of similar projects today. The new facilities and services portion of the plan is estimated to require an investment of \$1.309 billion. Maintenance and operations are expected to require \$303 million, totaling \$1.612 billion over a 25 year planning time frame.

Table 7.1 presents the preliminary planning-level cost estimates for the actions required to implement the plan. This table is organized in the same manner as Chapter 6, to facilitate easy identification of each action and comparison of this information with other chapters. It should be stressed that these are planning-level cost estimates; a final estimate can only be developed after detailed scoping of a project.

Examination of Table 7.1 reveals:

- That the financial plan supports the fundamental strategies described in Chapter 5; and
- That the total cost of the plan of \$1.612 billion is less than anticipated funding of \$1.615 billion, making the plan fiscally reasonable.

Table 7.1 Preliminary Planning-level Cost Estimates

Recommended Actions	Capital	Preliminary Planning-Level Cost Estimate (X1,000,000)	
		Operation & Maintenance	Percent of Plan Cost
Preserve and Maintain the Existing Transportation System			
Highway	348.0	63.0	
Transit	3.0	190.0	
Aviation	0.5	0.5	
Rail	0.5	0.5	
Total	352.0	254.0	38%
Improve Management of the Existing System			
Technology (ITS, TMC, Downtown Dover Signals)	15.0		
Intersection Improvements	112.0		
Facility Upgrades	296.0		
Transit	2.0		
Total	425	0	26%
Develop and Expand Other Modes of Transportation			
Transit (including passenger rail service)	324	22	
Sidewalks and Bikeways	72	2	
Total	396	24	26%
Provide Additional Roadway Capacity			
New Construction	136	6	
Total	136	6	9%
Other			
Studies/Monitoring	0	20	
Total	0	20	1%
Total	1,309	303	

Total Preliminary Planning-Level Cost Estimate: \$1,612,000,000

Current Amount of Estimated to be "Reasonably Available": \$1,615,000,000

