



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

### Commonwealth Transportation Board

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*Agenda item # 15*

### RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**January 12, 2022**

#### MOTION

**Made By:** Ms. Hynes **Seconded By:** Mr. Kasprowicz  
**Action:** Motion carried, unanimously

#### **Title: Approval of Virginia Highway Safety Investment Strategy**

**WHEREAS**, across the nation, traffic deaths are up an estimated 18.5% the first six months of 2021 as compared 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, in Virginia, from January 2021 through the end of October 2021, traffic deaths are up almost 13 percent compared to the same period in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to §33.2-373 of the *Code of Virginia*, it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (the Board) to establish the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program (the Program) to reduce motorized and non-motorized fatalities and severe injuries on highways in the Commonwealth, whether such highways are state or locally maintained; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to §33.2-373 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board shall adopt an investment strategy to guide the investments of the Program, and the investment strategy shall cover a period of at least five years and seek to achieve a significant reduction in the anticipated number of fatalities and severe injuries over the covered period and shall give priority to projects, strategies, and activities based on the expected reduction in fatalities and severe injuries relative to cost, including improvements that are widely implemented based on a high-risk roadway feature that is correlated with a particular crash type, rather than crash frequency

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to §33.2-373 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board, beginning in Fiscal Year 2024, shall, after program administration costs, allocate safety funds in accordance with its adopted investment strategy that includes allocating at least 54 percent of safety funds

for infrastructure projects, 29 percent of funds to address the behavioral causes of crashes, and the remaining for other eligible safety projects pursuant to the investment strategy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) have developed a proposed data-driven highway safety investment plan that will deploy Virginia’s limited highway safety resources to projects and efforts with maximum potential to reduce traffic deaths and injuries; and

**WHEREAS**, a key finding from data-driven analysis demonstrates that systemic and hybrid safety projects—proven low-cost improvements, such as high-visibility backplates, flashing yellow left turn signals, and rumble strips, systemically spread on a roadway network—provide more potential crash reduction benefits for lower costs than do spot improvement projects; and

**WHEREAS**, in its workshop meeting on December 7, 2021, the Board was presented with the proposed investment strategy and information and recommendations relating to the prioritization and investment of limited Virginia Highway Safety Program funds to maximize the benefits in crash reductions and make progress toward the Commonwealth’s “Toward Zero Deaths” vision for roadway safety; and

**WHEREAS**, after due consideration of the information received, the Board believes that the investment strategy, as set forth below, should be adopted and used to select projects for highway safety funding in the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) to improve transparency in the project selection process, accelerate delivery of selected projects and investment strategies, and aid in achieving reductions in fatalities, serious injuries, and non-motorized crashes;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Commonwealth Transportation Board hereby approves the following investment strategy to govern prioritization and selection of highway safety infrastructure and behavioral projects for funding:

1. VDOT shall develop an infrastructure implementation plan for the continued deployment of proven systemic and hybrid safety countermeasures across the roadway network, including VDOT and locally-maintained facilities. The implementation plan shall:
  - a. Include, but not be limited to: edge-line rumble strips on the primary system; centerline rumble strips on the primary system; pavement shoulder wedge; chevrons and curve visibility enhancements; high-visibility traffic signal backplates; flashing yellow arrows; unsignalized intersection signage and marking; pedestrian crossing improvements; pavement markings, traffic control devices, and other enhancements on two-lane rural roads; road diets; and other systemic/hybrid safety improvements as identified through research or data-driven analysis;

- b. Be consistent with the emphasis areas included in Virginia's current Strategic Highway Safety Plan and in support of achievement of CTB adopted performance targets;
  - c. Include an estimate of the effectiveness of full deployment of the implementation plans; and
  - d. Be updated periodically to advance additional systemic safety improvements.
2. In order to prioritize, accelerate and maximize the deployment of systemic and hybrid infrastructure safety improvements, the Board will not approve new spot improvement projects until Fiscal Year 2026 unless the systemic and hybrid infrastructure initiatives have been fully funded and their scheduled completion is accelerated as much as possible.
  - a. The Board may also consider funding spot improvement projects prior to the Fiscal Year 2026-2031 SYIP, should a proposed spot improvement project address a dire and immediate safety need and receive the recommendation of the Commissioner of Highways by meeting the following minimum thresholds:
    - i. Benefit/Cost ratio greater than 10;
    - ii. Project to be implemented or under construction in less than one year; and
    - iii. Proposed scope will address the observed crash types.
3. Highway safety funding for infrastructure projects will be distributed as follows:
  - a. After funds are set aside for program administration (approximately 5 to 10 percent), the remaining funds shall be programmed to projects in accordance with the above safety infrastructure implementation plan through the six-year improvement program.
  - b. Minimum funding levels for locally-maintained roadways shall be based on the proportion of fatalities on locally-maintained versus VDOT-maintained roads with funds available beginning in Fiscal Year 2024 for use on systemic safety improvements.
  - c. The funds for VDOT-maintained roads will be programmed based on the risk-based locations of the systemic safety treatments included in the Implementation Plans.
4. Funding for systemic infrastructure projects on locally-maintained roads will be awarded through a competitive application process with projects that have a higher return on investment receiving priority. If a sufficient number of projects on locally-maintained roadways are not identified and funds remain, the remaining funds may be used to fund and advance projects on VDOT-maintained roadways. VDOT oversight of safety projects on locally-maintained roads will continue to be in accordance with

Chapter 7 of VDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program Implementation Guidelines and other existing Locally Administered project requirements.

5. In cases where programmed infrastructure funds are no longer needed for the delivery of a project, or additional funds become available (beyond that assumed in the Implementation Plans), the unexpended surplus and unallocated funds will be reserved and managed centrally by VDOT to address budget adjustments on existing highway safety projects, to further advance systemic safety improvements, or to fund spot improvement projects pursuant to Item 2.
6. A project that has been selected for funding must be initiated, and at least a portion of the programmed funds expended, within one year of the budgeted year of allocation or funding may be subject to reprogramming. In the event a locally-administered project is not advanced to the next phase of construction when requested by the Board, the locality may be required, pursuant to §33.2-214 of the *Code of Virginia*, to reimburse VDOT for all state and federal funds expended on the project.
7. DMV shall develop a behavioral safety program investment plan for the deployment of behavioral countermeasures across the state to address the behavioral causes of crashes. The behavioral safety plan shall:
  - a. Include, but not be limited to investments to: expansion of the "Local Heroes" messaging campaign, expansion of the Sober Ride program, institution of public sobriety check points, conducting a NHTSA-administered alcohol impaired driving assessment and law review, creation of new media campaigns to fight drunk and drugged driving, creation of a statewide speed messaging media and outreach campaign with coordinated law enforcement and speed data pilot, creation of a distracted driving media campaign, expand motorcycle safety media messaging, enhancement and amplification of pedestrian and bicycle safety media campaigns, creation of a juvenile licensing ceremony video, expansion of the GrandDriver CarFit program, expansion of the Grand Driver testing centers, expansion of GrandDriver paid media and other behavioral initiatives as identified through experience, data-driven research or analysis;
  - b. Be consistent with the emphasis areas included in Virginia's current Strategic Highway Safety Plan and in support of achievement of CTB adopted performance targets ;
  - c. Include an estimate of the effectiveness of full deployment of the Implementation Plans; and
  - d. Be updated periodically to advance additional behavioral safety improvements.

8. In cases where programmed behavioral funds are no longer needed for the delivery of a specific initiative, or additional funds become available (beyond that assumed in the Implementation Plans), the unexpended surplus and unallocated funds will be reserved and managed centrally to address budget adjustments or to further advance other behavioral initiatives.
9. On an annual basis, VDOT and DMV will report on the following:
  - a. Progress on advancement of infrastructure and behavioral safety implementation plan;
  - b. Funding distribution information;
  - c. Anticipated benefits of investments and performance to date; and
  - d. Recommendations for changes to the infrastructure and behavioral portion of the investment plan, as needed.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board understands the use of federal safety funds requires VDOT and DMV to meet a number of federal requirements and this Policy does not supersede federal requirements, including those governing obligation authority and project delivery. Federal safety funds not subject to this strategy include High Risk Rural Roads (23 USC 148(g)), Railway-Highway Crossings (23 USC 130) and Vulnerable Road Users as defined in Title I Subtitle A, Section 11122 of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board directs the Commissioner of Highways and the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to take all actions necessary to implement and administer this investment strategy, including, but not limited to, the development of Implementation Plans and supporting guidance establishing the process for screening, scoring and selection of projects.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Board approval of this item replaces and supersedes the, December 11, 2019 resolution titled “Approval of Highway Safety Improvement Program Project Prioritization Policy.”

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## CTB Decision Brief

### Approval of Virginia Highway Safety Investment Strategy

**Issue:** In accordance with §§33.2-373 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) must establish the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program to reduce motorized and non-motorized fatalities and severe injuries on highways in the Commonwealth, whether such highways are state or locally maintained. It is also the responsibility of the CTB, per §§33.2-373, to adopt an investment strategy to guide the investments of the Program. The investment strategy shall cover a period of at least five years and seek to achieve a significant reduction in the anticipated number of fatalities and severe injuries over the covered period and shall give priority to projects, strategies, and activities based on the expected reduction in fatalities and severe injuries relative to cost, including improvements that are widely implemented based on a high-risk roadway feature that is correlated with a particular crash type, rather than a crash frequency.

At the December 11, 2021 CTB Workshop meeting, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) presented a proposed highway safety investment strategy in a presentation titled “Virginia Highway Safety Program Behavioral and Infrastructure Investment Plan.” The presentation outlined the proposed investments in behavioral and infrastructure safety initiatives over the next several years. The proposed investments are proven countermeasures and were chosen for their expected effectiveness at reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries in the Commonwealth. This proposal builds upon and follows an initial VDOT systemic safety plan and HSIP funding policy that was approved by the CTB in 2019. VDOT’s original 2019 systemic safety plan is currently deploying eight proven safety countermeasures on roads throughout Virginia and will continue to completion, included as part of this investment strategy.

**Facts:** During the first six months of 2021, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that national traffic deaths are up an estimated 18.5% as compared to 2020. This follows a national increase in traffic deaths of over 7 percent in 2020 compared to 2019. Virginia has also seen increases in fatalities in recent years, experiencing an increase of almost 13 percent from January 2021 through October 2021 as compared to the same period in 2020. In 2020 there was an increase in Virginia traffic deaths of over two percent compared to 2019. Common factors involved in fatal crashes include a combination of behavioral and infrastructure issues. As such, the proposed investment strategy focuses on investing in both behavior and infrastructure initiatives.

In 2012 Congress enacted Title 23 section 150 of the US Code, which mandates the establishment of performance management to transform the Federal-aid highway program. The resulting regulations provide a means to the most efficient investment of Federal transportation funds by refocusing on national transportation goals, increasing the accountability and transparency of the Federal-aid highway program, and improving project decision-making through performance-based planning and programming. One such national transportation goal focuses on safety and seeks to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. For background, in 2018, the CTB adopted Virginia Safety Performance Targets for 2019, but directed OIPI and VDOT to develop a data-driven process to establish targets and evaluate current investment strategies. In June 2019, the CTB adopted data-driven Safety Performance Targets for 2020 based on rigorous statistical methods; however,

modeling results for Safety Performance Targets predict increases in fatal crashes, which the CTB found unacceptable. The CTB further directed OIPI, VDOT and DMV to develop a plan that would result in a net reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes.

In its workshop meetings in June, July and September 2019, the CTB was presented with information and recommendations for an outcome-focused HSIP policy with the objective to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes through increased funding to systemic and hybrid safety improvements and to guide prioritization and investment of HSIP funds to provide the highest benefit per dollar and make progress toward the Commonwealth's "Toward Zero Deaths" vision for roadway safety. Additionally, the Board was presented an initial systemic implementation plan, which included a cost estimate and schedule for deployment of eight priority systemic infrastructure improvements along with an estimate of the annual number of fatalities and serious injuries reduced once fully deployed. At its September 2019 meeting, the CTB amended the FY2020-2025 SYIP, approving the project recommendations from the initial Implementation Plan to begin deployment of systemic safety improvements in all nine construction districts.

Now, almost two years later, VDOT has completed two of the eight systemic initiatives; flashing yellow arrow, and high-visibility traffic signal back plates, and is making good progress at deploying the other six initiatives in the initial plan. With the passage of the Virginia transportation bill in 2020 and associated establishment of the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement program as outlined in §§33.2-373, it is now time to approve the first highway safety investment strategy as presented to the CTB at the December 11, 2021 workshop meeting. The proposed resolution presents the highway safety investment strategy and required actions of DMV and VDOT to implement the strategy:

**Recommendations:** VDOT and DMV recommend the CTB adopt the Virginia Highway Safety Investment Strategy, which will supplant the Highway Safety Improvement Program Project Prioritization Policy, approved by the CTB on December 11, 2019. Further, it is requested that the Commissioner of Highways and Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles be authorized to take all actions necessary to implement and administer the strategy.

**Action Required by CTB:** The CTB will be presented with a resolution for a formal vote to approve the Virginia Highway Safety Investment Strategy and direct the Commissioner of Highways and the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles be authorized to take all actions necessary to implement and administer the strategy.

**Result, if Approved:** If approved, VDOT and DMV will develop applicable guidance and implement the Virginia Highway Safety Investment Strategy.

**Options:** Approve, Deny, or Defer.

**Public Comments/Reactions:** N/A