

PSRC's Federal Transit Administration Funding Process – Recommended Revisions

Executive Board | March 23, 2023



Puget Sound Regional Council

Presentation Overview



- Background and Purpose
- Existing FTA Funding Process
- Transportation Policy Board Working Group Discussion and Recommendation



Transportation Policy Board FTA Working Group

- Purpose = reevaluate the current PSRC Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding distribution process with an equity lens
 - *At direction of Executive Board and Transportation Policy Board*
- 11 working group members – Transportation Policy Board members and transit agency leadership
- Met six times between September 2022 and February 2023

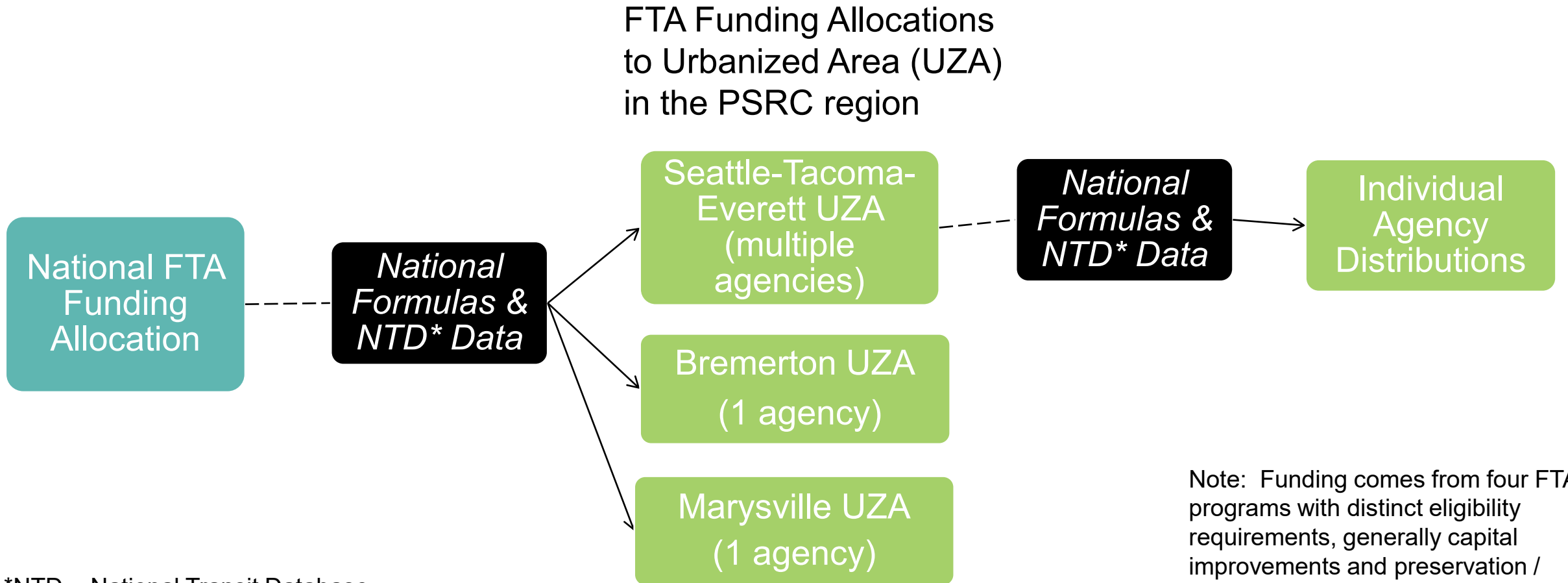


Transportation Policy Board FTA Working Group

- Key principles =
 - There is a need to improve service to historically underserved populations
 - PSRC funds should be equitably distributed, in line with PSRC's equity focus populations
 - ❖ *people of color, people with low incomes, seniors, youth, people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency*
 - The funding process should focus on equity while honoring existing commitments by preserving the earned share distribution
 - The funding process should focus on local transit service needs and not just high-capacity transit



FTA Formula Programs and Distributions



*NTD = National Transit Database

Note: Funding comes from four FTA programs with distinct eligibility requirements, generally capital improvements and preservation / asset management activities



Breakdown of Current FTA Process

**Transit Agency
Operating & Service
Data**
(revenue and passenger miles)

FTA uses transit data as self-reported in the National Transit Database (NTD)



- Bremerton UZA 100%
- Marysville UZA 100%
- Seattle-Tacoma-Everett UZA ~ 86-88%

**Regional Attribute
Data**
(population, density)

FTA uses data from the decennial U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)



- Seattle-Tacoma-Everett UZA ~12-14%



Working Group Discussion and Recommendation

- Discussions highlighted each member's commitment to equity
- Alignment around a new approach, building from the existing process
- Support current transit services and equity populations, but also support expansion of services, particularly local transit



Working Group Discussion and Recommendation

- **Summary of recommendation for distribution of funds within the Seattle-Tacoma-Everett UZA:**
 - Maintain the earned share distribution process
 - ❖ *support and maintain the existing system*
 - With the regional portion of funds, apply an equity formula distribution
 - ❖ Focused, intentional distribution that looks at all transit service being provided to the region's equity populations and distributes funds accordingly
 - ❖ The methodology considers equity populations within a ½ mile walkshed of all bus stops and a 1-mile walkshed of all rail stops, with an adjustment for ferry services



Working Group Discussion and Recommendation

- Monitoring and Reporting:
 - Each agency will identify specific projects to receive funding and will include a description of how each project will support and improve equity
 - *PSRC will work with the Transportation Operators Committee to develop guidelines for these submissions and the specific level of detail that should be provided for each project*
 - PSRC will continue to monitor transit and equity-related data for reporting in the RTP Performance Dashboard, and information related to improving equity and equity trends may be incorporated into future Transit Integration Reports
 - *PSRC will work with the Transportation Operators Committee to identify a baseline and specific metrics against which future success will be monitored*
 - Reporting and monitoring will be reported both to the TPB and the TPB Transit Caucus



Working Group Discussion and Recommendation

- Final Recommendation and Minority Opinion:
 - Each working group member has provided a signature to demonstrate support of the recommendation
 - However, a minority opinion is also included –
 - Three members preferred a larger proportion of funding be applied towards the equity formula distribution; key points =
 - New federal act provided a large increase in funding, providing an opportunity to reinvest in new ways
 - The earned share distribution rewards established agencies and services more than smaller agencies seeking to grow
 - A higher share of funding to the equity formula would provide more funding for local transit services, supporting better access to high-capacity transit and a greater focus on equity focus populations



Recommended Action

The Executive Board should approve the recommended revisions to the methodology used to distributed PSRC's FTA funding, as described in agenda item 7 and summarized in Attachments 7A and 7B.

