



Puget Sound Regional Council

Transportation Policy Board

Thursday, December 14, 2023 • 9:30 – 11:30 AM

All Members Remote

Attend, watch or listen

- The public can attend meetings at PSRC's office.
- Watch the meeting live at <https://www.psrc.org/watch-meetings>
- Listen by phone 1-888-475-4499, Meeting ID: 878 6268 1077, Passcode: 840998

Provide public comment

- **Public comment must relate to an action or discussion item on the agenda. Each member of the public will have 2 minutes to speak.**
- **In-person**
Public comment may be made in person at PSRC's office.
- **Comment during the meeting by Zoom or phone:** [Register here](#)
To allow staff time to process requests, registration is required and closes at 8:00 am the day of the meeting. Late registrations will not be accepted.
- **Written comments**
Comments may be submitted via email to cmoreau@psrc.org by 8:00 am the day of the meeting. Comments will be shared with board members. Comments received after the deadline will be provided to board members after the meeting.

Public comments are public records and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, RCW Chapter [42.56](#).

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call (9:30) - Mayor Dana Ralph, Chair**
- 2. Communications and Public Comment**
Public comment must relate to an action or discussion item on the agenda.
- 3. Report of the Chair**
- 4. Director's Report**
- 5. Consent Agenda - Action Items (9:45)**
 - a. Approve Minutes of Transportation Policy Board Meeting held November 9, 2023
- 6. Discussion Item (9:50)**
 - a. Project Tracking Policies and Program Updates – *Jennifer Barnes, PSRC*
- 7. Discussion Item (10:10)**
 - a. Recommendations on PSRC's FHWA Equity Pilot – *Charles Patton, PSRC*
- 8. Discussion Item (10:35)**
 - a. Preparing for the 2024 Project Selection Process – *Kelly McGourty, PSRC*

9. Information Items

- a. Transportation Work Program Progress Tracker
- b. 2024 Meeting Schedule

10. Next Meeting: January 11, 2024, 9:30 – 11:30 AM. All Members Remote

Major Topics for January:

- 2025-2026 FTA Funding Allocations
- 2024 Project Selection Process

11. Adjourn (11:30)

Board members please submit proposed amendments and materials prior to the meeting for distribution. Organizations/individuals may submit information for distribution. Send to Casey Moreau, e-mail cmoreau@psrc.org or mail.

For language or ADA assistance at PSRC board meetings, please contact us at 206-464-7090 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. For TTY-based telecommunications relay service dial 711.

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Puget Sound Regional Council

MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

November 9, 2023

To watch a video of the meeting and hear the full discussion, please go to:
<https://www.psrc.org/watch-meetings>.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Mayor Dana Ralph, Chair. Chair Ralph announced that the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) meeting would be hybrid, allowing for remote and in-person attendance. The meeting will be live streamed, and a call-in number was provided for members of the public to listen. Chair Ralph acknowledged and thanked the number of members attending in person.

A quorum was established by roll call.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Ralph shared her thanks to Mayor Mary Lou Pauly for chairing the October meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kelly McGourty, PSRC, reported that there are many state plans out for public comment and review: Transportation Electrification Strategy, the 2024 Draft State Highway System Plan and the Washington Broadband Equity Access and Development Program.

Ms. McGourty noted an information item in the packet regarding an upcoming meeting related to Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program Phase 2 funding. She also shared that the third Sunday in November is the annual day of remembrance for road traffic victims.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve Minutes of Transportation Policy Board Meeting held October 12, 2023

ACTION: The motion was made by Councilmember Jennifer Robertson and seconded by Mayor Mary Lou Pauly to adopt the Consent Agenda. The motion passed.

RELEASE 2025-2026 FTA FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Gutschow, PSRC, provided a high-level overview of PSRC's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding programs. She also shared the background of how the FTA funding distribution methodology was updated for 2025-2026 funds.

The changes to the methodology maintained the earned share distribution process but made significant changes to the distribution of regional funds. Regional funds are now distributed solely based on an equity formula. The equity formula uses a focused and intentional methodology which looks at all the transit services provided to the region's equity focused populations and then distributes those funds accordingly.

The Transportation Operations Committee (TOC) developed procedures for implementing the new equity formula. The call for projects was then released in July 2023. Ms. Gutschow reviewed the total funds available for distribution for both the earned share and equity formula. PSRC staff reviewed all project submissions for eligibility and consistency with regional policies. She also gave an in-depth overview of the equity formula allocation and the adopted criterion by which project submittals were evaluated. She then noted the types of projects included in the recommended project list.

Ms. McGourty noted a minor change in the agenda packet that related to a project moving funds. She shared lessons learned from implementing the new equity formula allocation and described the robust discussions at the TOC regarding the various project types and how they conform to the purpose of the equity pilot.

Ms. Gutschow noted that the TPB is being asked to release the projects for public comment. Public comment will be open through December 15. At its January 11 meeting, the TPB will be asked to review and recommend Executive Board approval. At its January 25 meeting, the Executive Board will take action for final approval of funding recommendations.

Members discussed the purpose and intent of the new equity formula and the nuances across project types, particularly preventive maintenance activities.

Action: It was moved by Councilmember Kate Kruller and seconded by Councilmember Jan Schuette that the Transportation Policy Board release for public comment the lists of projects recommended for:

- \$506.9 M in 2025-2026 FTA earned share funds, as identified in Attachment A.
- \$99.7 M of 2023-2026 FTA equity formula funding as identified in attachment B.

The motion passed.

STATUS REPORT ON PSRC'S FHWA EQUITY PILOT

Dr. Charles Patton, PSRC, shared that the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) has been working with staff on the Equity Pilot created as part of the 2022 project selection process with \$6 million in PSRC's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds.

Dr. Patton reviewed the Equity Pilot schedule. The deadline for projects has been extended until November 15. At the end of the year, the EAC will review the outcomes of the pilot program. The goal is to develop strategies that improve how PSRC integrates equity into PSRC's project selection process. At its December meeting, TPB will hear EAC recommendations on the projects to receive funding and improvements to future project selection processes. TPB is then scheduled to adopt the full Policy Framework in January.

Dr. Patton shared initial feedback from the EAC on the pilot, which is evaluating two pathways. One pathway updates the criteria and point values within the existing structure, keeping equity as a standalone criterion. The second pathway incorporates those same updates but transitions equity to be woven throughout all of the criteria. Dr. Patton gave an in-depth overview of each pathway for the pilot.

Members discussed the additions to the criteria and it was clarified that only one pathway will be moved forward for consideration, with potential revisions.

PREPARING FOR THE 2024 PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Ms. McGourty noted that the board has discussed the project selection process at its previous meetings. PSRC's Executive Board and the Regional Project Evaluation Committee have also been briefed and their feedback will be presented for TPB review.

Ms. McGourty first reviewed the current funding distribution processes. To date, there have been no suggestions to revise existing distribution splits. Ms. McGourty then reviewed the options for consideration related to safety, climate and equity. Ms. McGourty noted that the agenda packet had information on the criteria and how these policy emphasis areas are incorporated. The packet also had information about how the projects scored with criteria.

Members discussed the changes implemented in the previous project selection cycle and allowing time to determine if they resulted in the desired outcomes. Staff shared that it can take time for projects to pivot in response to policy changes. Ms. McGourty noted that the Equity Pilot demonstrated that more pointed questions do return better responses from projects. Per a board member question, Ms. McGourty noted the challenges to collecting data after project implementation.

Ms. McGourty reviewed options for changes for safety. Feedback to date has been a consensus to increase the point values to demonstrate the importance of safety. There has also been consensus to update the criteria and language for safety to tie more closely to the Safe System Approach and FHWA proven safety countermeasures. Staff can provide more specific language in December. Lastly, the board has discussed asking for a commitment from agencies to have or commit to developing a safety plan based on a Safe System Approach. She noted feedback to date has included support for this concept but also concerns that it could be challenging for a smaller agency, and it would be difficult for PSRC to enforce. Members shared that a checklist for a Safe System Approach could be considered. Members also noted that a phased approach may be beneficial, leading up to the 2026 competition. Ms. McGourty shared that a phased time frame could work as the Regional Safety Action Plan is currently in development.

Ms. McGourty next reviewed the options for consideration for climate, including updating scoring values. She shared feedback received to date, including the suggestion to exclude projects adding general purpose capacity. Members shared concerns about not funding projects that meet concurrency requirements, such as capital projects. Members also shared that increased capacity doesn't necessarily equate to more greenhouse gases if more streets support transit, connectivity, and density. Members also shared that climate emphasis may change over time as fleets electrify. Clarification was provided that active transportation considerations are included throughout the criteria, including elements of comfort and planning for all ages and abilities.

Ms. McGourty shared that members are welcome to send feedback before the next meeting. The topic will be discussed again at the December 14 meeting.

Chair Ralph thanked members for attending and participating in the meeting. The next two meetings will be remote only for members due to PSRC relocating offices.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 AM.

TPB MEMBERS & ALTERNATES PRESENT

Attachment A - Attendance Roster.

GUESTS and PSRC STAFF ATTENDING

(As determined by staff)

Ben Bakkenta, PSRC
Josh Brown, PSRC
Nancy Buonanno Grennan, PSRC
Doug Cox, PSRC
Heather Culver, PSRC
Sara Gutschow, PSRC
Craig Helmann, PSRC
Paul Inghram, PSRC
Kathryn Johnson, PSRC
Piset Khuon, PSRC
Kelly McGourty, PSRC
Casey Moreau, PSRC
Dr. Charles Patton, PSRC

Attachments:

A – Transportation Policy Board November 9, 2023, Attendance Roster

Transportation Policy Board - November 9, 2023				5.a - Att. A	
Voting Members			✓	Non-voting Members	✓
King County	2	CM Girmay Zahilay	1	Associate Members	
		CM Dave Upthegrove	1	Island County	1
		Vacant Alt			1
		Vacant Alt		Thurston Regional Planning Council	1
Seattle	2	CM Dan Strauss			1
		CM Alex Pedersen	1	Public Agency Members	
		CP Debora Juarez Alt		Puget Sound Clean Air Agency	1
Bellevue	1	CM Jennifer Robertson	1		1
		CM Janice Zahn Alt	1	Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board	1
Cities/Towns	3	CM Kate Kruller, Tukwila	1		1
		MYR Dana Ralph, Kent, Chair	1	WA Transportation Improvement Board	1
		MYR Mary Lou Pauly, Issaquah	1		1
		CM Peter Kwon, SeaTac Alt	1	PSRC Committees	
		CM Wendy Weiker Mercer Isl Alt		Regional Staff Cmte.	1
		DEP MYR Jay Arnold, Kirkland Alt	1		1
Local Transit	1	CM Rod Dembowski		Regional Project Evaluation Cmte.	1
		Vacant Alt			1
Kitsap County	1	COM Christine Rolfes	1	Transportation Operators Cmte.	1
		COM Charlotte Garrido Alt			1
Bremerton	1	MYR Greg Wheeler	1	Private/Civic Members-Business/Labor	
		CP Jeff Coughlin Alt	1	WA Trucking Associations exp. 12/31/25	1
Cities/Towns	1	CM Leslie Schneider, Bainbridge Isl	1		1
		CM John Clauson, Port Orchard Alt		Vacant exp. 12/31/25	1
Local Transit	1	MYR Rob Putaansuu, Port Orchard	1		1
		CM John Clauson, Port Orchard Alt		Seattle Met. Chamber of Commerce exp. 12/31/25	1
Pierce County	1	CM Ryan Mello, Vice Chair	1	Master Builders of Pierce County exp. 12/31/23	1
		CM Dave Morell Alt			1
Tacoma	1	DEP MYR Kristina Walker	1	Private/Civic Members-Community/Environment	
		CM Olgy Diaz Alt		Seattle Aging & Disability Services exp. 12/31/23	1
Cities & Towns	1	CM Tim Ceder, Milton	1		1
		MYR Josh Penner, Orting Alt		Vacant exp. 12/31/25	1
Local Transit	1	CM Marty Campbell, Pierce County			1
		MYR Daryl Eidinger, Edgewood Alt			1
Snohomish County	1	CM Jared Mead		Public Health Seattle/ King County exp.12/31/23	1
		CM Strom Peterson Alt			1
Everett	1	CM Ben Zarlingo	1	Vacant exp. 12/31/23	1
		MYR Cassie Franklin Alt			1
Cities/Towns	1	CM Jan Schuette, Arlington	1	Non-voting	16
		MYR Pro Tem Stephanie Vignal, Mill Creek Alt		Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members	
Local Transit	1	CM Kim Daughtry, Lake Stevens		State Legislators	87
		CM Jan Schuette, Arlington Alt		Districts within PSRC's boundary	
Regional Transit	1	CM Ed Prince, Renton	1		
		MYR Kim Roscoe, Fife Alt			
Federally Recognized Tribes					
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe	1	CM John Daniels, Jr.			
		Vacant Alt			
Puyallup Tribe of Indians	1	Andrew Strobel			
		Robert Barandon Alt			
Suquamish Tribe	1	CM Luther (Jay) Mills			
		CHRMN Leonard Forsman Alt			
Statutory Members					
Ports	1	COM Toshiko Hasegawa, Seattle	1		
		COM Cary Bozeman, Bremerton Alt	1		
WA Trans. Commission	1	COM Jim Restucci	1		
		COM Nicole Grant Alt	1		
WSDOT	1	Robin Mayhew			
		Todd Lamphere Alt	1		
Legislative Transportation Cmte. (Not Counted for Quorum)					
House Transportation Cmte.	2	Vacant			
		REP Jake Fey, D Alt			
		REP Dan Griffey, R			
		REP Andrew Barkis, R Alt			
Senate Transportation Cmte.	2	SEN Marko Liias, D			
		SEN Emily Randall, D Alt			
		Vacant, R			
		Vacant, R Alt			
Voting	32	(Quorum = 14) Quorum Total	20		
		Total Voting members present	25		



Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

December 7, 2023

To: Transportation Policy Board

From: Kelly McGourty, Director, Transportation Planning

Subject: **Project Tracking Policies and Program Updates**

IN BRIEF

PSRC's adopted project tracking policies are designed to ensure the timely use of PSRC's federal funds and to increase the delivery of transportation investments that support the region's long-range plans. Among other things, the policies address the required annual delivery target of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds, as well as the parameters by which project sponsors may request extensions to their delivery deadlines. Each year a rebalancing process is conducted to address any gaps in delivery, following a specific set of procedures identified in the project tracking policies.

At the December 14 Transportation Policy Board meeting staff will provide a briefing on the 2023 delivery target, overall trends in project delivery, and recommendations by the Regional Project Evaluation Committee on improvements to the adopted project tracking policies and procedures.

DISCUSSION

PSRC's project tracking program has evolved over the years to ensure successful delivery of projects, by addressing issues caused by project delays and the potential risk of losing unused funding. This evolution has included responding to the annual delivery target requirement for FHWA funds begun in 2013. Regions must meet their delivery target for that year's FHWA funds or risk losing the unused portion of funds to other parts of the state.

The current adopted project tracking policies include an allowance for sponsors to request up to a one-year extension, if warranted due to unforeseen delays. While

acknowledging the challenges many projects experience due to a variety of factors, these extensions result in a gap to meeting the current year's delivery target. Other factors such as higher allocations than estimates and returned funds due to project cancellations or other issues also impact delivery. The policies therefore further include a five-step approach to filling the delivery gap each year, including the advancement of funds in later years and parameters around supplemental funding actions if needed. The five-step rebalancing policies are included in Attachment A.

In addition to addressing the annual delivery targets for PSRC's FHWA funds, the project tracking program also encompasses regular monitoring of all projects awarded PSRC funds, through to final completion. Twice a year project progress reports are requested from sponsors and a variety of data is collected on the overall status of each project, including completion of project milestones, changes in total cost, and any issues causing delays to the schedule.

Meeting the region's delivery target each year is challenging, and supplemental funding actions have been required nine times over the past ten years. The project tracking policies are continually reviewed and evaluated for improvements to ensure the region's delivery target is met and to address new and emergent issues.

PSRC convened a Project Delivery Working Group comprised of members of the Regional Project Evaluation Committee (RPEC) and the four countywide transportation forums between January and September 2023 to review the existing policies and procedures, in part due to the region's 2022 delivery target not being met. An interim update to the policies was adopted by the board in April to address emergency situations, and the group continued their evaluation and developed additional recommendations to strengthen the existing policies.

RPEC has reviewed the working group recommendations for continued improvements to the adopted project tracking policies to address current delivery issues and ensure continued achievement of delivery targets into the future. These recommendations encompass improvements both to procedures within the project selection process as well as to the five-step rebalancing process and timeline. The recommendations are summarized below and discussed in greater depth in Attachment A.

Within the project selection process:

- Change the evaluation of project readiness/financial plan from a 5-point criterion to an eligibility threshold.
- To mitigate future delays and extensions, only allow one phase to be requested at a time in any given competition.

In the five-step annual rebalancing process:

- Award an increase to the federal shares of existing projects before awarding new funding to immediately ready to go contingency projects.
- Adjust process timelines to prevent late in the year issues and encourage earlier obligation submittals.

At its December 14 meeting, the Transportation Policy Board will be briefed on the status of PSRC's 2023 annual FHWA delivery target, trends in project delivery over time, and the recommendations from RPEC to strengthen the Project Tracking Program policies and procedures. Final action is anticipated in January as part of the *2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Barnes at (206) 389-2876, jbarnes@psrc.org.

Attachments:

- A. Regional Project Evaluation Committee: Policy Recommendations to Help Address Project Delivery Issues.

ATTACHMENT A
Regional Project Evaluation Committee
Policy Recommendations to Help Address Project Delivery Issues

Problem Statement

PSRC conducts a competitive process to select projects that best meet regional policies. Our region has difficulty achieving required delivery each year, typically requiring supplemental funding outside of the normal competitive process, pushing and sometimes missing obligation deadlines needed to ensure delivery within each fiscal year.

As a region, we want to:

- achieve our delivery target with initially-awarded projects each year;
- stop having large supplemental funding actions each year and maintain the integrity of our competitive processes;
- demonstrate that we can deliver federal funds and be in position to receive additional federal funds above our allocation; and
- return our contingency list process back to its original form - utilize for new or returned funding before the next process, not a need for immediately ready-to-go projects to meet delivery.

Recommended Policy Change #1 – In funding competitions, remove Project Readiness/Financial Plan from the scored evaluation criteria and convert to an eligibility threshold.

Every project submitted into PSRC's project selection processes is reviewed for eligibility prior to the application process. However, the staff comments on project readiness and the financial plan are not being adequately addressed in the submitted applications. Projects then receive a funding award but later the issues emerge as a reason for delay and the projects require an extension.

The 5 points currently available in the competitions do not fully address the importance of this issue and have limited variation across projects. Instead, the recommendation will convert project readiness / financial plan into a stricter eligibility threshold.

Staff will work with WSDOT to develop the thresholds and expectations for projects to meet eligibility and proceed into the competition. PSRC will continue the detailed eligibility review of all potential projects, and will work with sponsors who are flagged as potentially ineligible to address issues prior to the competition. If the threshold

continues to be unmet, the project may not proceed until such time as the thresholds are adequately met.

Recommended Policy Change #2 – In funding competitions, do not award two phases (Preliminary Engineering / Design + the next phase (either Right of Way or Construction)); award only one project phase per competition.

There is a high correlation between the existing practice of allowing both Preliminary Engineering/Design plus the subsequent phase to be awarded and projects that have encountered delivery issues (either requiring a 1-year extension and/or returned funding). While Right of Way and environmental processes have been discussed as significant elements of the problem, they are not the only factors and limiting the requests to one phase at a time would address the primary issue.

Staff reviewed data regarding potential project type exemptions, but delivery issues with two-phase awarded projects occur across phases and project types, including preservation.

Recommended Policy Change #3 – In the annual five-step TIP rebalancing process, move “Increased federal shares” ahead of “Fund projects from the contingency list.” Transition the contingency list and potential distributions of funding to the original format.

The existing five-step rebalancing policies include the prioritized strategies listed below that are implemented when there are not enough projects able to deliver in a given year, and additional measures need to be taken in order to meet the required annual delivery target.

1. Advance projects from later years.
2. Exchange federal funds for local funds between phases or stages of a single project, or between projects within the same agency.
3. Fund immediately ready to go projects from the current adopted contingency lists.
4. Increase the federal share of awarded projects.
5. Solicit new immediately ready to go projects.

Under the current prioritized list of strategies, funds are awarded to immediately ready to go projects on the contingency list as step 3, thereby awarding funds to new projects or phases prior to providing an increase in the federal share of already awarded projects. This procedure is less consistent with the intent of the competitive processes by which projects are selected.

This recommendation moves “Increase the federal share of awarded projects” to Strategy #3 and moves contingency funding to immediately ready to go projects to Strategy #4. The contingency list would transition back to its original state, which would award funds to projects in priority order when additional funds become available – rather than the supplemental funding process which awards funds to immediately ready to projects to fill a delivery gap, regardless of ranking.

Recommended Policy Change #4 – In the annual TIP rebalancing process, move up the obligation deadline for (1) projects advancing funds from later years of the TIP, and (2) those projects receiving an increase in federal share, from July 15 to June 1.

Some delivery issues result from sponsors building insufficient time into their project schedules, or a tendency to push right up to obligation deadlines. A flood of submittals late in the year strains WSDOT review and can result in issues being identified late in the process, putting achievement of the delivery target in jeopardy.

This recommendation will address some of these issues in a manageable fashion, and build from earlier recommendations to accelerate and streamline the delivery of already awarded projects.



Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

December 7, 2023

To: Transportation Policy Board

From: Kelly McGourty, Director, Transportation Planning

Subject: **Recommendations on PSRC's FHWA Equity Pilot**

IN BRIEF

The Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) worked with PSRC staff throughout 2023 to review PSRC's current project selection process as it relates to equity and develop an equity pilot program to distribute approximately \$6 million of PSRC's 2025-2026 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds. The EAC will finalize their recommendations to the board at their meeting on December 7 for both the projects to receive funding as well as further equity improvements in PSRC's 2024 project selection process. On December 14 the Transportation Policy Board will be provided an overview of the EAC recommendations for review and discussion prior to final action in January.

DISCUSSION

In addition to substantial improvements to how equity was incorporated into the existing project selection process, as part of the 2022 *Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds* approximately \$6 million of PSRC's FHWA funds were set aside for an Equity Pilot Program. The EAC was asked to co-create this program and develop the parameters by which projects would be selected for funding, with an overarching focus on improving equity with transportation investments.

The EAC has been working on the Equity Pilot since January 2023. After several meetings focused on background and knowledge sharing, the EAC worked with staff to develop the parameters of the pilot which was released in September. The pilot was designed to evaluate several areas of improvements within the project evaluation criteria and guidance related to equity, most notably within the topics of community

engagement and displacement. In addition, the pilot explored the potential impacts from weaving equity throughout the full suite of criteria, rather than as a separate, stand-alone criterion.

Eight project applications were submitted into the pilot program, requesting just under \$6.4 million. Applicants assisted with the pilot by responding to criteria changes under two pathways. Both pathways increased the overall point values for equity-related criteria. A summary of the changes evaluated in the pilot is included in Attachment A. A summary of the projects submitted and the scores under each pathway is included in Attachment B.

At their meeting on December 7, the EAC will review the outcomes of the pilot program and the results of the scored ranking of the eight submitted projects. The committee will develop a recommendation for the distribution of the \$6 million in pilot funding, as well as a recommendation on improvements to how equity is addressed in the upcoming project selection process.

Staff will brief the board on the EAC recommendations at their meeting on December 14. It is anticipated that these recommendations will be incorporated for final action into the *2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds* in January.

For more information, please contact Charles Patton, Program Manager – Equity Policy and Initiatives, at cpatton@psrc.org or Kelly McGourty, Director of Transportation, at kmcgourty@psrc.org.

Attachments:

- A. Summary of Equity Pilot Pathways and Improvements
- B. Summary of Project Applications and Scores

Summary of Equity Pilot Pathways and Improvements

1. Updating existing structure (Pathway 1)

- Update criteria
- Update guidance
- Increase equity criterion point values

2. Equity woven throughout all criteria (Pathway 2)

- Same criteria updates
- Same guidance updates
- Equity incorporated throughout



1. Updating existing structure

- Update criteria and guidance – Circulation, mobility & accessibility:
 - Address transit improvements for all services and times of day, not just commuter lines and periods
 - Is there a way to incorporate **resilience of the system** into the criterion?
 - Emphasize access to **opportunities and destinations**
 - Connect to existing PSRC resources such as the new **Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP)** typology



- Update criteria and guidance – **Equity:**
 - Assist sponsors in identifying the most marginalized communities impacted / improved by the project
 - Start with PSRC’s 6 **equity focus population areas (EFAs)**, support identification and understanding of data
 - Incorporate the **intersection of two or more EFAs** in the project area (e.g., in an area of higher percentages of both people of color and people with low incomes)
 - Include other datasets on disparities – e.g., WA Environmental Health Disparities map, Coordinated Mobility Plan
 - Improve assessment of addressing impacts and providing benefits
 - **Provide best practices and examples**



Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 1

7.a - Att. A

- Update criteria and guidance – Equity:
 - Address under Community Outreach and Engagement:
 - Provide **best practices and examples**, setting expectations
 - **Compensation, language, partnership practices** included in the project / agency outreach to the extent feasible
 - Include the variety of outreach strategies that could / should be conducted
 - Increase **point values** for this subsection



- Update criteria and guidance – Equity:
 - Address the quality of Displacement policies
 - Connect to **Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP)** resources
 - Provide improved guidance and examples



1. Equity woven throughout all criteria

- Include the same criteria and guidance updates
- Identify equity populations **upfront, before all criteria**
- Include **addressing impacts / benefits to EFA** populations **within all applicable criteria**
 - Additional questions related to **access to jobs** and **improved safety**, specifically for **Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)**
- Equity criterion becomes Community Outreach and Displacement
 - Identification and impacts questions now throughout all criteria



Summary of Project Applications and Scores

2023 Equity Pilot Program Project Ranking & Funding Request

Sponsor	Project Title	Pathway 1		Pathway 2		Request
		Rank	Score	Rank	Score	
Tacoma	South 38th St. & South Cedar St. Pedestrian Safety Improvements	1	76	1	76	\$ 1,000,000
Seattle	Beacon Avenue South Safety Project	2	71	2	69	\$ 865,000
Federal Way	BPA Trail - City Center Extension	3	67	3	68	\$ 600,000
Snohomish County	Center Road Pedestrian Improvements	4	52	4 (tied)	49	\$ 485,000
WSDOT	SR 99 Preliminary Design Study	5	51	4 (tied)	49	\$ 1,000,000
Kent	Benson Corridor 20-minute Neighborhood Plan	6	47	6	43	\$ 750,000
Pierce Transit	Equitable Bus Shelter Program	7 (tied)	43	7	42	\$ 1,000,000
Tulalip Tribes	Marine Drive / Hermosa Heights Safety Improvements	7 (tied)	43	8	41	\$ 654,000
Total						\$ 6,354,000





Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

December 7, 2023

To: Transportation Policy Board
From: Kelly McGourty, Director, Transportation Planning
Subject: **Preparing for the 2024 Project Selection Process**

IN BRIEF

PSRC has project selection authority for several sources of funds from both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Prior to each funding cycle, the policies and procedures for the project selection process are reviewed and updated as needed to reflect current regional priorities and requirements and are documented in the *Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*. The next process will be conducted in 2024 for PSRC's 2027-2028 FHWA and FTA funds.

The board will continue discussions begun in September to prepare for the 2024 project selection process, with a specific emphasis on the policy focus areas of safety, climate and equity. At the December 14 meeting, the board will review the areas of consensus to date and review additional information and options for ultimate approval in January in the *2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*.

DISCUSSION

A competitive project selection process is conducted every two to three years for the distribution of PSRC's federal funds. The next process will be conducted in 2024 for PSRC's 2027-2028 FHWA and FTA funds. Prior to each process a Policy Framework is adopted, outlining the policy guidance for the distribution of funds and other details on how the process will be conducted.

Safety, equity and climate are priority themes in both the Regional Transportation Plan and PSRC's funding processes. Over the past three months the board has been provided information on how these policy focus areas are currently addressed and discussed various options for improvements to the 2024 project selection process.

Information has been provided to support these discussions, including background on the project evaluation criteria, information on the projects funded in the last cycle, and administrative details of the project selection process.

In particular, the board has discussed key questions within four policy areas. The following summarizes where preliminary consensus has been reached, and where further discussion is needed in December.

Funding distributions:

The board was asked if they wished to consider changes to the existing set-asides and/or the distribution splits across competitions. No changes have been suggested to date, although board members indicated a wish to review the proposed changes to the areas below before finalizing this portion of the discussion.

Safety:

The board was asked if they wished to consider the following:

- Updating the scoring values for safety in the project evaluation criteria (currently 6-8 points in the regional competition).
- Updating the safety criterion & language to more concretely tie to the [Safe System Approach](#) and [FHWA proven safety countermeasures](#).
- Consider a requirement that each agency have, or commit to develop, a safety plan based on a Safe System Approach in order to be eligible to compete for PSRC funding.

The board reached consensus to pursue each of the three elements above. Attachment A contains draft scoring options for the full suite of criteria, including safety. At the December 14 meeting staff will provide preliminary language related to updating the criteria and guidance. For the last bullet the consensus was not to impose any burdens for the upcoming 2024 project selection process, but rather to convey the expectation of a commitment to pursue the Safe System Approach by the 2026 project selection process. Concerns have been raised regarding the resources and time needed to update local safety plans; extending the expectation to 2026 allows time for the Regional Safety Action Plan to be completed and additional guidance provided, as well as the completion of additional local safety plans under the Safe Streets and Roads For All grant program. Staff will propose more specific draft language related to this bullet at the meeting on December 14.

Climate:

The board was asked if they wished to consider the following:

- Updating the scoring values for air quality / climate in the project evaluation criteria (currently 20-50 points in the regional competition).
- Setting parameters around the types of projects that would be eligible – or ineligible – for funding (for example, projects adding general purpose capacity).

Consensus has not yet been reached on the topic of climate, and staff was asked to develop some options for further board consideration. Attachment A contains draft scoring options for the full suite of criteria, including climate. Additional options for improvements to how climate is addressed in the project selection process are provided below. Also provided below is background information on PSRC's air quality and climate change scoring process and project-level emissions reduction tool.

Air Quality / Climate Scoring Background

The Air Quality / Climate criterion evaluates every project, regardless of funding source, for the potential to reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and fine particulate emissions. These are the two top priority pollutants identified at the state and regional level - in particular, diesel exhaust and the reduction of diesel particulates is identified as the air pollutant most harmful to public health. This priority is also identified in federal legislation and is a key component of CMAQ funding.

PSRC uses a ***technical project-level emissions estimation tool*** based on national and regional research and data to evaluate projects. Applicants provide detailed information based on the scope and extent of their projects, tailored to reflect the potential emissions reduction from each type of project. More information is provided in the [Air Quality Guidance Document](#) provided in the call for projects; the tool is also provided as a resource in the call for projects. ICF International, a leading global climate consultancy, is under contract to update PSRC's project-level emissions tool to reflect current research and state of the practice in time for use in the 2024 project selection process. ***This will include research into available data and best practices for the incorporation of "induced demand," which in general addresses capacity expansions on highways and major arterials.***

Two key factors in the final score are the magnitude of the project's potential emissions reductions, and the timing of the air quality benefits – i.e., when will the full potential emissions reductions occur. The timing of the air quality benefits is important to help the region continue to meet current and future air quality standards, as well as to assist the region and state in reaching the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction limits. Projects resulting in a substantial reduction in emissions will score the highest under this criterion. In general, this includes projects that ***1) eliminate a substantial number of vehicle trips; 2) reduce a significant amount of vehicle miles traveled; 3) convert vehicles or facilities to alternative fuels; and/or 4) reduce a significant amount of fine particulates through the reduction of heavy duty diesel truck idling or the shortening of heavy duty diesel truck trip lengths.***

Potential Further Climate Improvements for Consideration

In addition to the draft scoring options contained in Attachment A, the following options are provided for discussion to further improve how air quality and climate are addressed in the project selection process.

- As noted in the section above, PSRC will update the project-level emissions estimation tool to reflect current state of the practice, including consideration of induced demand for capacity expansion of highways and major arterials.
- Also as noted above, the Air Quality / Climate Change criterion will continue to prioritize projects that result in significant emission reductions of greenhouse gases and fine particulates through the substantial elimination of vehicle trips, reduction of vehicle miles traveled, conversion to alternative fuels, and reduction of heavy duty diesel truck idling or the shortening of heavy duty diesel truck trip lengths.
- To further address concerns raised regarding general purpose roadway projects, the board may consider the exclusion of projects that include general purpose capacity expansion on limited access highways into the competition. A map of these facilities is included in Attachment B. Projects on these facilities that do not add general purpose capacity, for example those that provide preservation or safety improvements, would still be eligible to compete.
- Since the final scores and rankings reflect how well each project meets each of the project evaluation criteria and regional policies, the board may consider setting a threshold for funding projects only above a certain total score - e.g., 60% of total available points.

Equity:

The Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) is finalizing recommendations on the Equity Pilot and improvements to the equity criterion at their meeting on December 7; staff will brief the board on these recommendations under an earlier agenda item at the December 14 meeting.

The board will continue discussions of these key policy areas at the December 14 meeting and consensus will be sought on the remaining items. A final recommendation is anticipated in January on the suite of improvements to be incorporated into the *2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*. Upon approval of the *Policy Framework* the call for projects for the project selection will be released, anticipated in early February.

For more information, please contact Kelly McGourty, Director of Transportation Planning, at 206-971-3601 or kmcgourty@psrc.org.

Attachments:

- A. Preliminary Scoring Options
- B. Map of Limited Access Roadways in the PSRC Region

Attachment A: Preliminary Scoring Options

The following scoring options reflect the proposals from the Equity Advisory Committee and the Regional Project Evaluation Committee discussed elsewhere in the board agenda packet, and include preliminary draft concepts for revisions to safety and climate. Shown here is the scoring framework for the Regional competition; the final revisions will also be applied to each of the four countywide competitions.

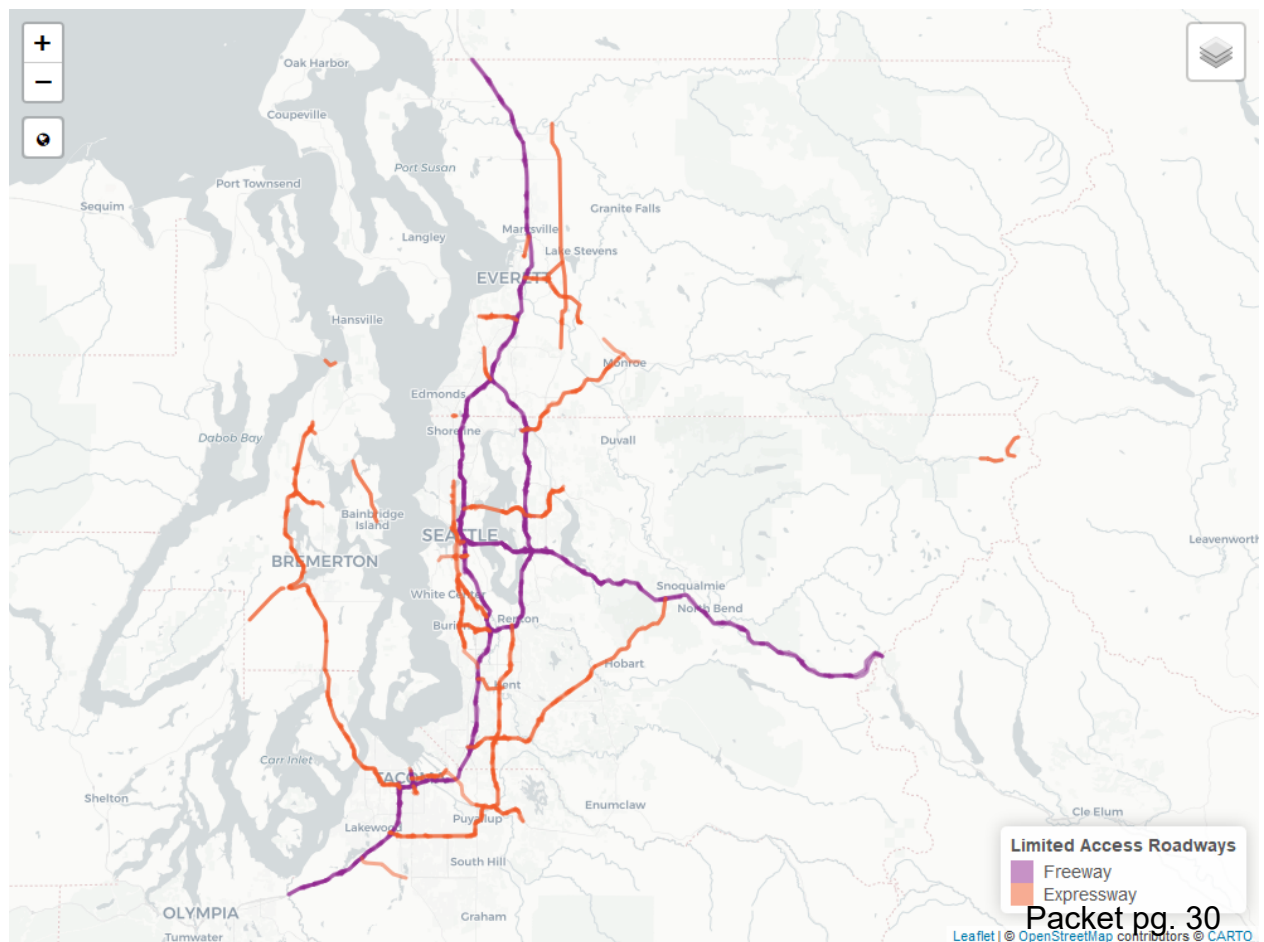
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Funding (STP)

CRITERIA	STP Point Values Option 1, Current Process	STP Point Values Option 2, Safety and Equity Increased	STP Point Values Option 3, Safety, Equity and Climate Increased	Staff notes
Development of Centers	30	25	18	To increase the point values in Safety, Equity and Climate, point reductions must come from these two criteria
Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility	27	23	15	
Equity	10	--	--	The preliminary EAC recommendation is to incorporate Equity throughout <u>all</u> criteria, but leave a stand-alone Outreach and Displacement criterion. Additional equity related points are therefore woven throughout the criteria, in addition to the 12 points reflected here for Outreach and Displacement.
Outreach and Displacement	--	12	12	
Safety	8	20	20	Based on preliminary board consensus to increase safety points, these options increase safety to be at least equal to climate and equity. 5 points of the increase come from the eliminated Project Readiness / Financial Plan criterion.
Air Quality / Climate Change	20	20	35	Option 2 does not change the Air Quality / Climate Change score. Option 3 increases it to 35 points, and reduces points for Development of Centers and Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility.
Project Readiness / Financial Plan	5	--	--	Per the RPEC recommendation, Project Readiness / Financial Plan is moved to an eligibility threshold for all projects to meet prior to submittal into the competitions.
TOTAL	100	100	100	

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program Funding (CMAQ)

CRITERIA	CMAQ Point Values Option 1, Current Process	CMAQ Point Values Option 2, Safety and Equity Increased	Staff notes
Development of Centers	15	13	The Air Quality / Climate criterion has a much larger share of points for CMAQ projects. As such, the distribution of points to reflect increases in safety and equity is attempted to be balanced across the other criteria.
Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility	14	12	
Equity	10	--	
Outreach and Displacement	--	10	
Safety	6	15	
Air Quality / Climate Change	50	50	
Project Readiness / Financial Plan	5	--	
TOTAL	100	100	

Limited Access Roadways in the PSRC Region



Limited Access Roadways
Freeway
Expressway

PSRC Transportation Work Program - Draft Progress Reporting

DRAFT Progress Chart (Timeline as of December 7, 2023)

Status	
■	Preparing
■	In Progress
■	Complete
■	Tentative

Project	Status to-date
Regional Transportation Plan	
Alignment of RTP and Funding Cycles	tbd - pending further board discussions
Update RTP Project Prioritization Framework	tbd - pending further board discussions
Board work group to determine 2026 RTP scope of work	Anticipate use of RTP Steering Committee, beginning February 2024
TPB direction on scope of work for 2026 RTP	Discussions beginning February 2024
RTP development	anticipated Q3 2024-Q2 2026
Financial Strategy Refinement	tbd - pending further board discussions
PSRC Funding	
Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds	Board discussions currently underway; anticipated adoption January 2024
FHWA Project Selection: Board Action	Q3 2024, following competitions
FTA Funding Methodology Process Discussion	Completed with board action in March 2023
FTA Project Selection / Equity Formula Distribution	Projects released for public comment November 9 - December 15; action pending in January 2024
Annual FTA Adjustments Process	Complete
Rural Town Centers and Corridors Project Selection	Complete
Transportation Alternatives Project Selection	Complete
Equity Pilot Program Development	Complete
Equity Pilot Program Project Selection	Project recommendations and further EAC recommendations due December 2023
Consolidated Grant Program Regional Rankings	Complete
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	
2025 -2028 TIP Development	Q3-Q4 2024, following 2024 project selection
Conduct Equity Analysis of draft 2025-2028 TIP	Q3-Q4 2024
Release of 2025-2028 TIP for Public Comment	Q3-Q4 2024
Board Action on 2025-2028 TIP	Q4 2024
Monthly TIP Amendments	Ongoing
Project Tracking/Rebalancing	Ongoing
Climate: GHG Analysis and Planning	
2030 Transit Networks and Service	Complete
PSRC 2030 Network Modeling and Analysis	Initial modeling complete; Expert Review Panel convened September-October 2023, summary document being developed; next steps pending further board, RTP Steering Committee discussions
Puget Sound Regional Emissions Analysis Project	Complete
Regional Electric Vehicle Collaboration Clearinghouse	Operational/Ongoing, initial launch complete, maintenance and updates ongoing
Regional Electric Vehicle Collaboration Outreach	Ongoing, REV collaborative meetings scheduled for Q2 and Q4 (every year) - event held June 28
Develop Climate Implementation Strategy with Partners	Board discussions in Q1-2 2023 and expert panel convened; CPRG planning work underway with partners, Preliminary Climate Action Plan due to EPA March 2024; board briefings held Q3-4 2023
PSRC Board Progress Briefings	Ongoing
Regional Safety Plan	
Explore Grant/Funding Opportunities	Complete
Apply for Safe Streets for All Grant	Round 1 complete; Round 2 pending
Research current plans, roles and responsibilities	In Progress, beginning local safety plan inventory compilation

Convene Stakeholders	Complete - Regional Safety Summit held June 29
Develop Scope of Regional Safety Plan	Complete; board review September 2023
Develop Regional Safety Plan	Consultant RFP released October 2023; work to commence through end of 2024; adoption Q1 2025
Performance Measures and Dashboard	
<i>Align with Equity Tracker, other related monitoring efforts</i>	
Identify Measures	Complete
Develop Dashboard Outline for Board Feedback	Complete
Assemble Data	Initial set complete; ongoing and continuous
Publish Draft Dashboard	Complete
Refinement and Updates	Ongoing
Annual Board Briefings	tentative Q1 2024
Active Transportation Plan Repackaging	
Repackage Active Transportation Plan	Complete
ADA Transition Plan Technical Assistance	
Research current plans, roles and responsibilities	Preliminary research complete; moving to monitoring role
Board Briefing and Discussion	TPB briefing June 2023
Annual Transit Integration Report	
Report Development	Complete
Publish Report	Released November 2023
Big Ideas/Transformational Planning	
Regional Convenings to Support Effort	tbd - pending further board discussions
Future of HCT Regional Convening	tbd - pending further board discussions
Data Collection, Analysis, Performance Metrics	
Data collection, maintenance of viz tool, improvements	In Progress, Q1-Q4 2023
Equity, EJ analysis methodology improvements	tentative Q2-Q4 2023
RTP Financial Strategy	
Collaborate with Partners on Implementation Steps	tbd - pending further board discussions

2024 PSRC Transportation Policy Board Meetings

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March						
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					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
General Assembly May 30						

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August						
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
No meeting in August						

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Meetings are held 9:30-11:30 a.m. the second Thursday of the month. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. If a meeting is changed or cancelled, TPB members and alternates will be notified. Updated meeting dates are listed at <https://www.psrc.org>.