

Preparing for PSRC's 2024 Project Selection Process

Transportation Policy Board | January 11, 2024



Puget Sound Regional Council



We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.

psrc.org/equity

Today's Agenda

- Review of December TPB member poll results on each topic (14 respondents)
- Discussion of proposed revisions / improvements
- **Action on 2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds**



Reminders and Materials

- Began discussions in September
- Acknowledged significant improvements to safety and equity in 2022
- Focus for 2024 = further enhancements for safety, climate, equity
 - Includes criteria and scoring framework proposals
- Recommended improvements to PSRC's Project Tracking Policies and Procedures
- Other core policies and procedures in *Policy Framework* remain as is

Materials:

- *Attachment A: Summary of Policy Framework*
- *Attachment B: Scoring Options*
- *Attachment C: map of limited access highway facilities*
- *Attachment D: 2022 regional competition scores*



Discussion and Final Action

- Review and discussion of December poll and each proposal:
 - ✓ Safety
 - ✓ Climate
 - ✓ Equity
 - ✓ Scoring Framework
 - ✓ Scoring Thresholds
 - ✓ Project Tracking Policies
- *Recommend Approval of 2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*



1. Safety Criteria

- Update safety criteria & language to more concretely tie to the Safe System Approach and FHWA proven safety countermeasures
 - Criteria will describe and provide resources on the Safe System Approach
 - *Humans make mistakes, humans are vulnerable*
 - *Plan and design for Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Speeds*



USDOT,
<https://www.transportation.gov/NR/SS/SafeSystem>



1. Safety Criteria

- Applicants will describe how the project improves safety, particularly for vulnerable users
- Applicants will identify if any of the FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures are being utilized

- *For example, addressing:*

- *Speeds*
- *Pedestrian / Bicycle*
- *Roadway departure*
- *Intersections*



1. Safety Criteria

- From December poll:
 - *Should the Safety criteria and guidance language be updated to strengthen the connection to a Safe System Approach and FHWA's proven safety countermeasures?*
 - ❖ 12 Yes
 - ❖ 2 No

➤ *Further discussion and board vote*



2. Safety Commitment

- Incorporate a commitment to develop a safety plan / policies based on a Safe System Approach
 - ❖ PSRC is developing a Regional Safety Action Plan due in early 2025 under the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program
 - ❖ Up to 25 jurisdictions will also develop local safety action plans under SS4A, in coordination with the regional program or through individual grants



2. Safety Commitment

- The current safety criterion asks about adopted safety policies that informed the project. Additional proposed question:

USDOT is developing a framework for assessing how projects align with the Safe System Approach, and PSRC is developing a Regional Safety Action Plan due in early 2025.

- *Does your agency commit to adhering to the forthcoming guidance and continuing to work towards planning and implementation actions under a Safe System Approach, to reduce fatalities and serious injuries?*

PSRC will continue to monitor local safety action plans and revisit prior to the 2026 project selection process



2. Safety Commitment

- From December poll:
 - *Should applicants be asked to make a commitment to develop plans or policies in alignment with a Safe System Approach, as described?*
 - ❖ 12 Yes
 - ❖ 2 No

➤ *Further discussion and board vote*



3. Climate – Option to Limit Eligible Projects

- Do not allow projects on limited access highways that add general purpose vehicle capacity to compete for PSRC's federal funds
 - Only limits projects on these specific state highways that add general purpose lanes
 - Projects addressing safety, preservation, HOV on these facilities would still be eligible
 - Projects adding capacity on other facilities would still be eligible



3. Climate – Option to Limit Eligible Projects

- From December poll:
 - *Should limited access highway projects adding general purpose capacity be excluded from PSRC's funding competition?*
 - ❖ 5 Yes
 - ❖ 9 No

➤ *Further discussion and board vote*



4. Equity – EAC Recommendations

- The Equity Advisory Committee's recommendations from the Equity Pilot were presented in December
 - Improvements to the existing Equity criterion and point values
 - Incorporating equity throughout each criterion vs. a separate Equity criterion
 - Outreach and Displacement remains as a stand-alone criterion



4. Equity – EAC Recommendations

- From December poll:
 - *Should the Equity Advisory Committee recommendations on Equity be incorporated?*
 - ❖ 12 Yes
 - ❖ 2 No
- *Further discussion and board vote*



5. Scoring Framework

- Three scoring options presented:
 - Option 1 = 2022 existing process
 - Option 2 = Increased points for Safety, Equity
 - *Reflects EAC recommendations, RPEC recommendations on Project Readiness*
 - Option 3 = Option 2 plus increased points for Air Quality / Climate
 - *STP only; Air Quality / Climate already 50% of CMAQ score*



5. Scoring Framework

- From December poll:
 - *Which Scoring Framework Option is preferred?*
 - ❖ Option 1 – 5
 - ❖ Option 2 – 6
 - ❖ Option 3 – 3



5. Scoring Framework

- Given concerns raised about reducing scores for Centers, additional hybrid option proposed by TPB Chairs:
 - **Option 2A** = Increased points for Safety, Equity
 - *Increases Safety points, but to a lesser degree than Option 2 – “splits the difference”*
 - *Consistent with EAC recommendation, which also supports increasing points for safety*
 - *Applies to STP only; Option 2 would remain for CMAQ*



5. Scoring Framework

| CRITERIA | STP Point Values Option 1, Current Process | STP Point Values Option 2, Safety and Equity Increased | STP Point Values Option 2A, Safety and Equity Increased | STP Point Values Option 3, Safety, Equity and Climate Increased |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Development of Centers | 30 | 25 | 28 | 18 |
| Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility | 27 | 23 | 24 | 15 |
| Equity | 10 | -- | -- | -- |
| Outreach and Displacement | -- | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Safety | 8 | 20 | 16 | 20 |
| Air Quality / Climate Change | 20 | 20 | 20 | 35 |
| Project Readiness / Financial Plan | 5 | -- | -- | -- |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

➤ *Further
discussion
and board
vote*



6. Scoring Threshold

- Set a scoring threshold, below which projects would not be considered for funding
 - Sets a priority to fund only projects that best meet criteria and regional policy
 - Concerns specifically raised with funding low-scoring “immediately ready to go” projects on the contingency list – after competition – to meet the annual delivery target
 - *Mitigated with recommended project tracking revisions*



6. Scoring Threshold

- From December poll:
 - *Should a minimum project scoring threshold to award funding be applied?*
 - ❖ 7 Yes
 - ❖ 7 No



6. Scoring Threshold

- Given evenly split board opinion and logistical details to be determined (across regional and countywide competitions):
 - Recommendation that staff be directed to work with RPEC on this concept and return to the board later in 2024 with a more defined proposal and administrative details
 - *Can be amended into PSRC's Project Tracking Policies and Procedures*
 - *Would not affect 2024 project selection process, but could affect future contingency distributions and 2026 project selection process*
 - *Further discussion and board vote*



Remaining Policy Framework Elements

- Funding estimates (pending guidance from FHWA, FTA)
- Distribution splits between FHWA Regional and Countywide competitions, FTA Earned Share and Equity Formula Distributions
- FHWA Set-Asides: Preservation, Bicycle / Pedestrian, Kitsap County, Rural Town Centers & Corridors Program, PSRC funding
- Caps on number of applications / funding requests
- Contingency lists
- Project tracking policies and procedures



7. Project Tracking Policy Recommendations

RPEC recommendations presented in December:

- **In funding competitions:**
 1. Change project readiness/financial plan from a scored criterion to an eligibility criterion
 2. Award only one phase per competition (no PE+1)
 - **In annual rebalancing process, for supplemental funding:**
 3. Award increased federal shares before contingency projects
 4. Adjust process timeline to accommodate more June 1 deadlines
- ***Further discussion and board vote***



Action

The Transportation Policy Board should recommend Executive Board approval of the policies and procedures for the 2024 project selection process, to be documented in the *2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*.

This includes the elements as summarized in Attachment A and the revisions as discussed today.



Summary of Revisions

- Refine the safety criteria
- Request safety commitment
- Restrict general purpose capacity projects on limited access highways
- Equity Advisory Committee recommendations
- Scoring Framework Option
- Direct staff to develop a scoring threshold policy
- Updates to Project Tracking Policies and Procedures

