2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds

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

Policy Framework

- Policy direction from Board adopted in the *Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*
- Based on VISION 2050 policies and consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan
    - Adopted policy focus = *support for centers and the corridors that serve them*
- Projects must be consistent with local comprehensive plans
- Process conducted every two years
    - 2024 process will distribute FFY 2027-2028 funds

Project Evaluation Criteria

- Based on VISION 2050 policies
- Point values vary depending on funding source, competition
  - Development of Centers
  - Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility
  - Equity
  - Safety
  - Air Quality / Climate Change
  - Project Readiness / Financial Plan

❖ *2022 process made significant revisions to Equity and Safety criteria, and set aside funds for the Equity Pilot*

TPB Discussions on 2024 Process

- 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

January 25, 2024 Executive Board Materials:

- *Attachment A: Summary of Policy Framework*
- *Attachment B: Recommended Regional Scoring Framework*
- *Attachment C: Equity Pilot Summary*

Existing 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

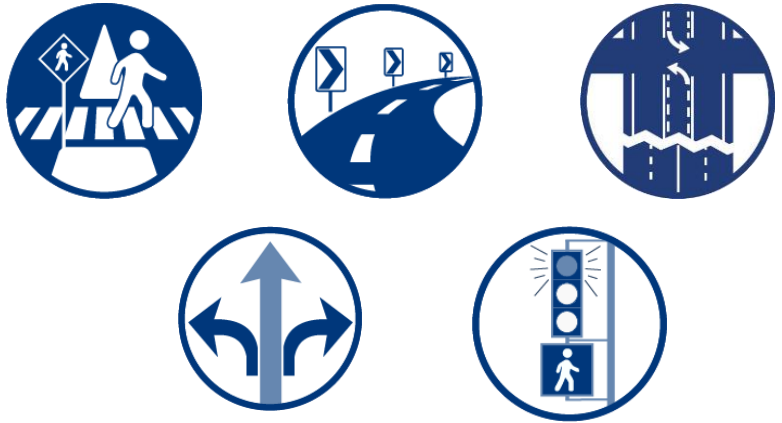
Revision 1. Safety Criteria

- 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/NRSS/SafeSystem

Revision 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*



Revision 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

Revision 2. Safety Commitment

- The current safety criterion asks about adopted safety policies that informed the project. Additional recommended 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

Air Quality / Climate

- Background on Air Quality / Climate scoring process
  - Technical project-level tool used by PSRC
    - Developed by ICF International, currently being updated to reflect state of the practice
      - *Including induced demand on major facilities*
    - Every project evaluated for potential emission reductions, based on specific parameters of each project – scope, scale, timing
    - All pollutants analyzed – greenhouse gases and fine particulates prioritized in scoring

Air Quality / Climate

- Highest scoring projects demonstrate significant emission reduction potential, from:
  - Reducing vehicle miles traveled
  - Reducing trips
  - Converting facilities / vehicles to alternative fuels
  - Reducing heavy duty diesel truck trips, miles or idling

➢ Points allocated based on scale of emissions reduced

- *Projects that increase emissions, or do not result in any emission reductions, do not receive any points*

Consideration to Limit Eligible Projects

- The Transportation Policy Board considered prohibiting projects on **limited access highways** that **add general purpose vehicle capacity** to compete for PSRC's federal funds
  - Would only limit 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
- Recommendation did not pass, but staff is directed to continue to research and evaluate this concept; the TPB will provide further direction on this work program at an upcoming meeting

Revision 3. Equity – EAC Recommendations

- The Equity Advisory Committee's recommendations from the Equity Pilot include:
  - 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

Revision 4. Project Tracking Policies

Updates to the Project Tracking policies and procedures include:

- 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

Revision 5. Regional Scoring Framework

- The Transportation Policy Board considered multiple scoring options to apply to the regional competition*
- Final hybrid recommendation doubles points for safety, applies the EAC recommendations on equity, and includes the project tracking recommendation
  - Air Quality / Climate is already 20-50% of the score, depending on the funding source
  - Concerns raised about reducing points for Centers

**countywide processes follow the same Policy Framework and revisions but are allowed to tailor; PSRC staff works with each forum on final criteria and scoring values to reflect the final board action*

Revision 5. Regional Scoring Framework

CRITERIA	Current STP Point Values	Recommended STP Point Values	Current CMAQ Point Values	Recommended CMAQ Point Values
Development of Centers	30	28	15	13
Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility	27	24	14	12
Equity	10	--	10	--
Outreach and Displacement	--	12	--	10
Safety	8	16	6	15
Air Quality / Climate Change	20	20	50	50
Project Readiness / Financial Plan	5	--	5	--
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Consideration of a Scoring Threshold

- The Transportation Policy Board considered setting a scoring threshold, below which projects would not be considered for funding
  - Would Set 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*

Consideration of a 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 2024 and future contingency distributions and 2026 project selection process*

Summary of 2024 Revisions

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

Next Steps

- January 2024 - Adoption of *Policy Framework*
- February 2024 –
  - *Staff working on incorporating revisions into regional and countywide criteria documents; updating guidance and resource materials*
  - *Call for projects to be released in early February; workshops to be held in mid-February*
- February – June 2024
  - Conduct project selection process
- July 2024
  - Project recommendations to board