

Performance Measures Beyond the Mainstream: Incorporating Economic Development in Transportation Decision Making, Puget Sound Regional Council

Background

On June 20, 2014 the Transportation Research Board's Statewide Multimodal Planning Committee partnered with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to hold a one-day peer exchange in Scottsdale, Arizona on performance measurement of accessibility, economic development, and health impacts of transportation. Charlie Howard of the Puget Sound Regional Council presented on the topic of economic development.

Overview

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has multiple planning documents that support economic development in the Seattle, Washington region. These documents include Vision 2040, the guiding planning document for region, the Transportation 2040 plan, and the Regional Economic Strategy.

Vision 2040 includes economic development policy focus areas, such as:

- Foster supportive environment for all businesses
- Focus on developing skills and promoting education
- Focus on jobs/housing balance and protect environment

The Regional Economic Strategy is organized around industry clusters and economic foundations.

Additionally, in PSRC's project prioritization process, some measures address the extent to which projects support job creation and existing and new businesses. These include:

- Access to areas of high job concentration—How well does the project support job retention or expansion by improving access?
- Access to economic foundations—How well does the project provide access to job-related training or educational opportunities?

Draft Transportation 2040 performance measures include:

- Freight mobility is improved
- Access to transportation is improved (for all)
- Access to jobs/ activities/ education and opportunities is improved

Each of these broad performance measurement categories are connected to more specific projects and measurement goals.

Purpose: Access to areas of high job concentration. How well does the project support job retention or expansion by improving access?			Prepopulated	% No Response	
J1a	Choose one	3	The area served by this project has an employment density ² of 18 jobs per acre, and is planned (has unused zoned capacity) to accommodate a density of 32 jobs per acre. (Areas that currently exceed the higher threshold would receive points here as well).	Yes	0%
J1b		1	The area served by this project has an employment density of 18 jobs per acre.	Yes	
J2	2	The area served by this project has an employment density of 15 jobs per acre for jobs related to cluster employment. ⁷	Yes	0%	
J3	2	The area served by this project has an employment density of 15 jobs per acre for family-wage related employment.	Yes	1%	
Purpose: Access to economic foundations. How well does the project provide access to job-related training or educational opportunities (vocational schools, community colleges, universities)?					
J4	3	In area with, or supports access to institutions identified as economic foundations.	Yes	0%	
10 points maximum score					

Challenges and Considerations in Implementation

- How to anticipate the future impact on job retention and creation (measures are all model-based)
- How to truly measure improvements to productivity caused by transportation investment, multiple outcomes (economic growth, access to opportunity, distribution of economic growth, etc)
- Reconciling the Triple Bottom Line: People, Prosperity, Planet
- "Economic Advantage," as the competitive edge is a difficult concept to measure

The peer exchange summary report can be found at: http://www.planning.dot.gov/Peer/Arizona/scottsdale_6-20-14_performance_outcomes.pdf