Peer Exchanges

Planning for a BetterTomorrow

FHWA/FTA
Transportation Planning Capacity Building

Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program

– Peer Exchange Report –

"Project Prioritization for Regional Long-Range Transportation Plans"

Location:	Seattle, WA
Date:	November 1, 2010
Host Agency:	Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
Peer Agencies:	Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Delaware Valley Regional Transportation Commission (DVRPC) Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) TransLink, Vancouver BC
Federal Agencies:	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)

I. Introduction

This report documents the presentations and discussions from a one-day peer exchange on "Project Prioritization for Long-Range Regional Transportation Plans" hosted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) on November 1, 2010 in Seattle, WA.

The event was sponsored by the Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program, which aims to advance the state of the practice in multimodal transportation planning nationwide. The TPCB Program is jointly funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

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II. Background

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 4-county Seattle, Washington region. *Transportation 2040* is PSRC's current long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In addition to *Transportation 2040*, PSRC has also adopted *Vision 2040*, which lays out a regional strategy for accommodating projected growth and development in the region.

With the adoption of *Transportation 2040* in May 2010, PSRC's policy boards directed staff to develop a new project prioritization process to help facilitate implementation of the plan. The new prioritization process must be developed by May 2012. It will comprehensively integrate multiple transportation policy goals, as well as help to prioritize transportation projects in a manner that reinforces and implements *Vision 2040*. In particular, PSRC staff was directed to design a process that would consider, at minimum, the following 11 goal areas:

1. Supporting the regional growth strategy articulated by *Vision 2040*, including focusing growth in regionally designated centers inside the Urban Growth Area

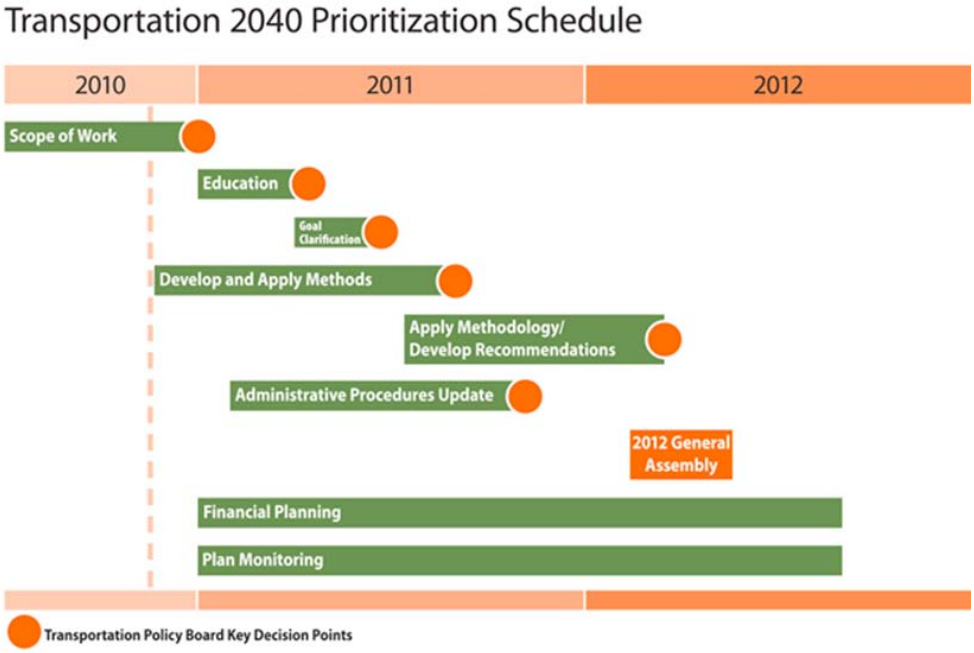
2. Reducing greenhouse gases
3. Reducing vehicle miles traveled
4. Improving freight mobility
5. Securing sustainable funding
6. Addressing equity and environmental justice
7. Reducing impacts on Puget Sound water quality
8. Addressing congestion and mobility
9. Promoting economic activity and employment growth
10. Achieving a jobs-housing balance
11. Addressing health and active living

PSRC staff is working with their committees and boards to design a new project prioritization process over the next two years leading to a final recommendation for adoption by the General Assembly[1] in the spring of 2012 (*see Figure 1, below*). The resulting prioritization process is expected to include multiple-criteria evaluation and weighting, as well as a mix of qualitative and quantitative factors. It will be updated on an ongoing basis and is expected to help PSRC:

- Establish a clearer sense of plan priorities
- Identify near-term priorities for legislative action
- Refine project admission procedures
- Keep track of program investments with financial assumptions
- Manage plan amendments which includes both removing and adding projects

PSRC requested a TPCB peer exchange to learn how other regional transportation planning agencies approach project prioritization for the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) to help inform its staff and Policy Board as they begin to develop their new prioritization process.

Figure 1. PSRC Timeframe and Schedule for Developing Project Prioritization Process



Source: PSRC

[1] The General Assembly is comprised of elected officials from all of PSRC's member agencies and meets annually to make major regional decisions such as adopting regional plans, approving the PSRC budget, and appointing officers. The Executive Board is comprised of representatives appointed by their General Assembly counterparts, often the same individual, and meets monthly to carry out the more "day-to-day" operations of the agency.

III. Goals and Peer Selection

The goal of this peer exchange was to help PSRC develop an improved multi-criteria project prioritization process to implement *Transportation 2040*.

The following criteria were used to identify appropriate peer agencies for the PSRC peer event. The MPO or transportation agency:

- Uses a project prioritization process with multiple-criteria and both quantitative and qualitative factors.
- Integrates project prioritization for the LRTP with parallel planning processes, such as the congestion management and project programming.
- Exhibits similar level of agency complexity and planning function to PSRC (e.g., multicounty, multijurisdictional, existence of major transit operator/s).
- Have similar regional transportation and land use context and goals to the central Puget Sound region (e.g. compact growth, transit development, connecting corridors).

Four regional transportation planning agencies were selected as peers based on the above criteria:

- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – San Francisco Bay Area, CA
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Philadelphia, PA
- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) – Atlanta, GA
- TransLink – Vancouver, BC

IV. Key Findings

Peer agency representatives were asked to share their experiences, lessons learned, and recommendations for using innovative, multi-criteria project prioritization processes for the (LRTP). The section below summarizes key findings that emerged from the day's discussions. For more detailed information on each peer agency's project prioritization approach, see the *Summary of Presentations* section below.

Key findings about developing a meaningful and effective project prioritization process in the LRTP are:

- **Setting a vision, then defining goals and objectives to support it is a critical step to develop an effective project prioritization process.** All peer agencies stressed the importance of creating a vision and goals, because the goals and objectives define and drive the rest of the planning and prioritization process. Furthermore, it is critical that the goals and objectives be recognized and embraced by the key decisionmaking body in order for the evaluation framework that result to have validity. Each of the peer agencies screens potential projects against an adopted vision and goals, and will only conduct more detailed prioritization analysis on projects that are consistent with the adopted vision and goal. This helps to ensure that project prioritization methods further the region's vision for growth and transportation system development.
- **Articulating a project prioritization process is an important outreach tool that can increase transparency and build trust with the public.** There are always more projects submitted for inclusion in a plan than there are funds available. Establishing a clear and understandable prioritization process can help the public better understand how and why investment decisions are made. Prioritization frameworks that capture a broad

range of social, environmental and economic objectives are helpful in engaging broader and deeper participation. The prioritization process establishes criteria to ensure that all projects support adopted goals and can help to cultivate an inherent level of trust that the selected projects will deliver basic benefits.

- **Performance management plays an important role in developing an effective project prioritization process.** All peer representatives stressed the importance of using performance measures to tie project prioritization and selection to the long-range regional vision and goals. MPO boards have found that performance data is very useful to help make decisions about which projects to include in the plan. To be effective, performance measures should be meaningful, measurable and monitorable.
- **There is no "one size fits all" approach to project prioritization.** Each MPO must work with regional stakeholders to develop a prioritization process that addresses the region's specific goals, resources, and needs. Participating MPOs use different approaches and criteria to evaluate, prioritize and select projects for long-range plan. Some prioritization processes are more detailed and technical, while others reflect broader policy priorities.
- **It is important to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools and analysis to develop a meaningful prioritization process.** All peer agencies conduct some type of benefit-cost analysis in order to prioritize projects. Peer representatives cautioned that the resulting score for a project is only as valuable as the quality of data and assumptions that went into the calculations. Some types of projects, such as livability projects and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may not score well in quantitative analysis because it can be difficult to accurately measure their costs and benefits. Each of the peers emphasized the importance of building qualitative factors into the prioritization process by providing supplementary information for projects whose benefits and costs may be difficult to quantify.
- **Weighting of project prioritization criteria should be left to the discretion of each agency's decisionmaking boards**. All of the peer representatives noted that ascribing weights to different project prioritization criteria is a politically sensitive process. The peers recommended leaving decisions about whether and how to weight criteria to the MPO board, since the board holds final decisionmaking authority over which projects to select for inclusion in the plan. Peers noted that there is still a role for staff to play in analyzing what the impacts of different weighting approaches would be, however.
- **Peer agencies tend to focus their prioritization efforts on projects that add new capacity and on funding sources that they have direct decision-making authority over.** Participating agencies noted that they do not prioritize all the projects included within their long-range plan. They tend to focus their prioritization analysis on regionally significant projects that add new highway or transit capacity in the region. They also tend to focus their prioritization analysis on funding sources that their agencies have discretion over, such as Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds and Surface Transportation Program.
- **Preservation and maintenance of the existing system is a focus for all peer agencies, but these areas are typically funded on a programmatic basis, rather than as individual projects.** For all four of the peer agencies, preservation and maintenance activities receive the largest percentage of funding in the LRTP. These activities are typically funded on a programmatic basis according to estimated needs, rather than as individual projects. As such, preservation and maintenance projects are not individually analyzed as part of the project prioritization process for the long-range plan.
- **Transportation modeling is extremely important for providing guidance on the anticipated outcomes of investments.** Clearly communicating the limitations and

constraints of models, and using other experiential inputs to triangulate the range of outcomes can also help to build credibility and support.

V. Summary of Presentations

During the morning session of the peer exchange, each peer agency representative presented an overview of its project prioritization process to PSRC staff, PSRC Transportation Policy Board members, and key regional partner organizations and stakeholders (*see Appendix B for full participant list*). The afternoon session provided time for peer agency representatives and PSRC's lead technical staff to meet and discuss prioritization processes in greater detail.

A summary of each peer agency's project prioritization process is found below.

MTC: The San Francisco Bay Area
Doug Kimsey, Planning Director

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves as the MPO for the 9-county San Francisco Bay Area region. Its current long-range regional transportation plan (RTP), *Transportation 2035*, was adopted in 2009. It includes approximately $218 billion in transportation investments over the next 25 years. Of the total funding in the plan, MTC only has decisionmaking authority over $32 billion, 15 percent of the total investments in the RTP. The remaining $186 billion contained in the RTP are funds that are programmed by the State DOT (CalTrans) or that are already committed to preservation and maintenance of the existing transportation system.

MTC has developed a 3-step project prioritization process for RTP projects that will be funded from the agency's $32 billion in discretionary funding. The process is performance based, and results are detailed in a *Performance Assessment Report*. The three steps are:

1. Establish a vision, goals and performance measures for the plan.
2. Conduct a performance assessment of potential projects, with quantitative and qualitative analysis.
3. Select projects for the fiscally-constrained plan.

MTC's vision for 2035 is to "support a prosperous and globally competitive Bay Area economy, provide for a healthy and safe environment, and promote equitable mobility opportunities for all residents." Goals and performance objectives were designed to support the vision. Each of the performance objectives is rooted in a specific pre-existing requirement (e.g., adopted MTC policy, state law) and is linked to one of the "Three Es" of sustainability – economy, environment, equity (*see Figure 2 below*).

Figure 2. Transportation 2035 Performance Objectives

E's	Goals	Performance Objectives
Economy	**Maintenance & Safety**	**Improve Maintenance**
		Local Streets and Roads: maintain pavement condition index of 75 or better
		State highways: distressed land-miles no more than 10% of system
		Transit: average asset age no more than 50% of useful life and average distance between service calls of 8,000 miles
		Sources: State and local plans
		Reduce injuries and fatalities
		Motor-vehicle fatalities: 15% from today
		Bike and pedestrian injuries and fatalities: 25% from 2000 levels
		Source: California State Strategic Highway Safety Plan
	Reliability	**Reduce delay**
		20% per capita from today
	Freight	*Source: California Strategic Growth Plan*
Environment	**Clean Air**	**Reduce vehicle miles traveled and emissions**
		Vehicle miles traveled: 10% per capita from today
		Fine particulate matter (PM2.5): 10% from today
	Climate Protection	Coarse particulate matter (PM45): 45% from today
		Carbon Dioxide (C02): 40% below 1990 levels
		Sources: State regulations and laws
Equity	**Access**	**Improve affordability**
		10% reduction from today in share of earnings spent on housing and transportation costs by low and moderately low income households
	Livable Communities	*Source: Adapted from the Center for Housing Policy*

Source: MTC Performance Assessment Report

A total of 700 projects with a combined cost of $90 billion were submitted for consideration. Using the adopted goals and performance objectives, MTC conducted a project-level performance analysis to prioritize the $90 billion in submitted projects for the $32 billion of discretionary funding available in the plan. The performance analysis was conducted well ahead of key decision points so that evaluation results could help to shape project selection for the final plan. MTC's performance analysis had two phases:

- **Qualitative Analysis** – All 700 proposed projects were organized into one of 21 project-type categories, such as bike and pedestrian, local interchanges, and transit efficiency and expansion. Then projects were screened and sorted for how many of the RTP policy goals they address, and whether they "support" or "strongly support" those goals.

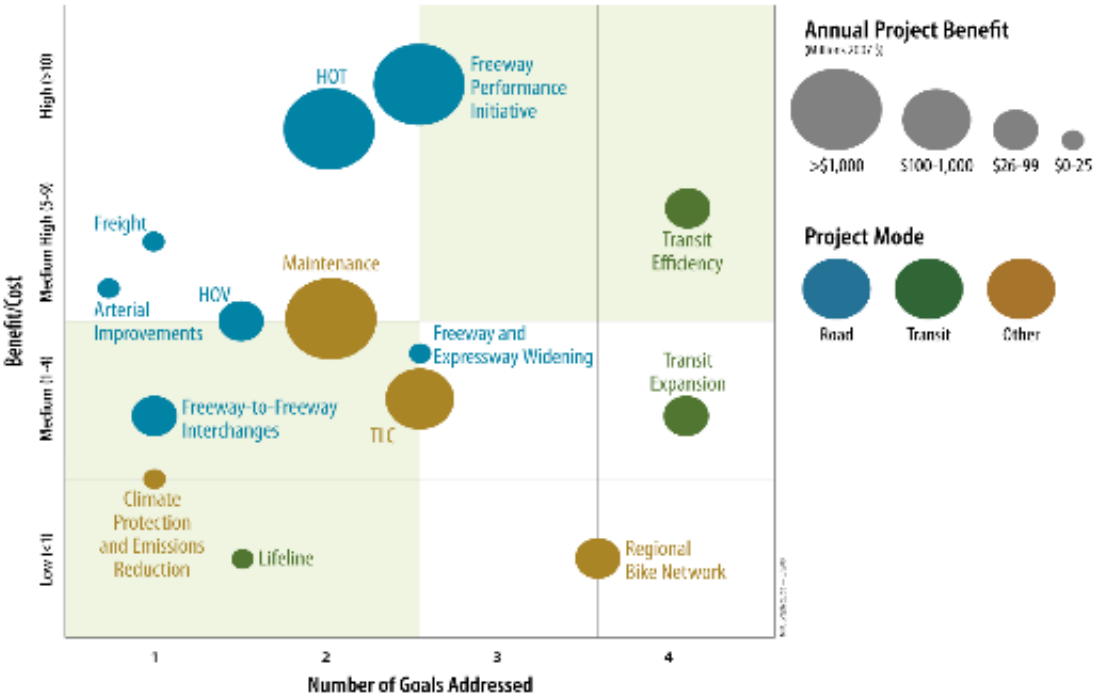
- **Quantitative Analysis** – "High-cost" projects (those over $50 million) were submitted to a quantitative performance analysis, which estimated the project's benefit-cost relative to the RTP's performance objectives. All performance objectives were weighted equally.

The projects that scored the highest benefit-cost ratios were "system efficiency" projects like the freeway operations program and high-occupancy toll lanes. The climate protection program, regional bike network, and smart growth program did not score as well on a benefit-cost ratio, but

MTC noted that this may be because they have not developed an effective way to measure the long-term costs and benefits of these types of projects.

Mr. Kimsey noted that MTC approaches performance assessment as more of an art than a science. The goal of the analysis was to identify the outliers – the projects that best and least supported RTP goals (*see Figure 3, below*). This information was used to inform board discussions about the trade-offs of different investment types and frame decisionmaking about which projects to include in the fiscally-constrained plan. MTC wanted to ensure that high-end performing projects – ones that supported multiple RTP goals and had a high benefit-cost ratio relative to RTP performance objectives – would be included in the plan. However, high performance was not the sole criteria by which projects were selected for inclusion in the plan. Low-end performing projects could be included if a compelling case could be made for their inclusion, such as being a local priority project, being cost effective for carbon emissions reduction, being voter approved or being a local priority project. For example, MTC's smart growth program (Transportation for Livable Communities) was not a high-end performing project but was deemed an important investment for other qualitative reasons by the MTC board.

Figure 3. Project Performance Assessment Results for MTC's *Transportation 2035*



Source: MTC Performance Assessment Report

DVRPC: The Philadelphia Region

Michael Boyer, Manager, Office of Long-Range Planning

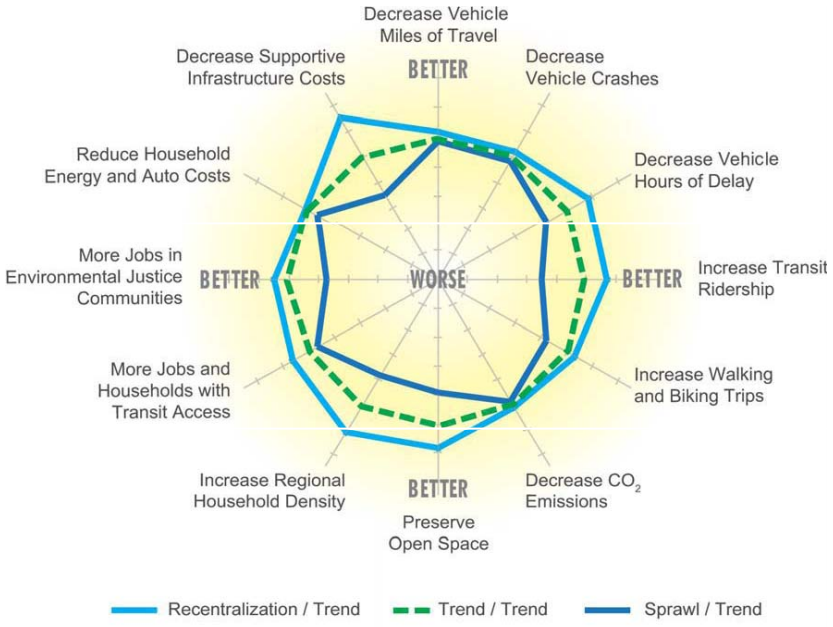
The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is the MPO for the Philadelphia region, which covers 9 counties and part of two states, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Its current RTP, *Connections 2035 – The Regional Plan for a Sustainable Future*, was adopted in 2009 and serves as both an RTP and regional comprehensive plan. As such, it provides a framework for developing regional policies and making investment decisions that integrate transportation, land use, environmental preservation, and economic development activities region-wide.

DVRPC's prioritization process for selecting projects in *Connections 2035*, involved several phases:

- Develop a shared vision for the long-range plan through scenario planning and extensive public involvement.
- Develop goals for the plan that reflect the region's final adopted development scenario.
- Perform a needs assessment to determine infrastructure needs and funding availability.
- Allocate RTP funding levels to categories of need.
- Only screen and prioritize individual projects that add capacity (highway or transit)

DVRPC held scenario planning workshops in each of the planning region's 9 counties to gather input from diverse stakeholders and develop a shared vision for the *Connections 2035* plan. Staff presented three development alternatives – Recentralization, Sprawl, and Trend – then used maps and other graphics to communicate the impacts of each alternative on a series of performance indicators (*see Figure 4, below*). Based on public input, the final adopted scenario was a combination of the Recentralization and Trend scenarios. It emphasizes compact development, conserving critical natural resources, reinvesting and revitalizing older communities, and expanding options for transit, walking and biking.

Figure 4. Performance of DVRPC's Three Development Scenarios for *Connections 2035*



Source: DVRPC Connections 2035

DVRPC then used the Plan scenario as a guide to develop a series of specific goals for the *Connections 2035* plan. These goals were organized into four key planning principles for the plan:

1. Create Livable Communities
2. Manage Growth and Protect Resources
3. Build an Energy-Efficient Economy
4. Modernize the Transportation System

DVRPC also developed a land use map for *Connections 2035* and identified regional centers throughout the region[2] around which it is appropriate to concentrate future growth and infrastructure, as well as an inter-connected system of natural resource areas targeted for protection.

Before evaluating individual projects for selection in the plan, DVRPC conducted an in-depth needs assessment with transit operators and the Pennsylvania and New Jersey DOTs to determine what types and levels of investments would be needed to bring the system up to a "state of good repair." DVRPC then worked with a technical advisory committee to allocate available funding across broad categories of need. The final funding allocation falls into three main categories (broken down into 13 subcategories) and focuses heavily on maintaining existing infrastructure, which reflects the maturity of Philadelphia's transportation system:

- Maintenance – 72 percent
- Operational Improvements – 16 percent
- New Capacity – 12 percent

DVRPC only conducted individual project screening and selection for projects within the New Capacity category. In order to be eligible, projects had to be "regionally transformative" (i.e., large scale) highway or fixed guideway transit projects, and had to pass a screening to ensure consistency with *Connections 2035's* future land use map and the region's Congestion Management Process. If projects were consistent with these factors they were then evaluated and prioritized based on the criteria below (*see Figure 5, below*), which were designed to reflect *Connections 2035* goals.

Figure 5. Selection Criteria for Evaluating Regionally "Transformative" Investments for Inclusion in Connections 2035

New Highway Capacity Projects	New Fixed Guideway Transit Projects
Does it serve a regional center (as designated in the Connection 2035 Planning Areas and Centers map)?	Does it serve an area with requisite density for the proposed transit mode (using a transit score index to ascertain requisite density)?
What is the level of environmental impact (an Environmental Screening Tool with 10 criteria was used to ascertain environmental impacts)?	Does it serve an area with a large environmental justice (EJ) population based on the Degrees of Disadvantage maps?
Is it located along a Priority Congestion Management Process (CMP) corridor?	What is the level of environmental impact (an Environmental Screening Tool with 10 criteria was used to ascertain environmental impacts)?
Is the project located on the Intermodal National Highway System (NHS) or an NHS Connector?	What is the project capital cost per passenger compared to other projects?
What is the cost per vehicle mile compared to other projects?	Project status (how far along in the design, environmental review, development process is it?)
What is the level of support/project status?	What is the level of county/operating agency support?
Are there other relevant qualitative factors?	

Source: DVRPC

[2] "Centers" are distinguished by place type (e.g., metropolitan, suburban, and town).

ARC: The Atlanta Region

John Orr, Senior Principal Planner

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) serves as the MPO for the 10-county Atlanta region. ARC is also a Regional Development Agency charged with comprehensive land-use planning by the state of Georgia. As such, its long-range plan, *Plan 2040*, serves as an integrated transportation and land use development plan.

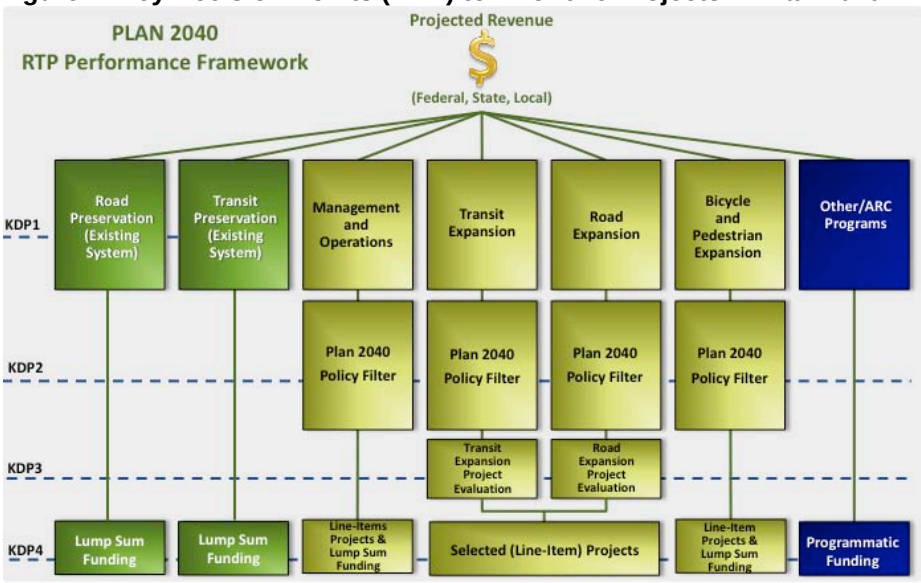
Plan 2040 seeks to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability through an adopted vision, and specific supporting goals and objectives (*see Figure 6, below*). The vision, goals, and objectives are used to guide plan development, performance measurement activities, project selection, and the allocation of funds.

Figure 6. *Plan 2040's* Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Vision	Goals	Objectives
Visionary leadership for sustainable growth by balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth and social needs while maximizing benefits to all.	**Goal 1:** Lead as the Global Gateway to the South *(addresses the environment)* **Goal 2:** Encourage Healthy Communities *(addresses the environment)* **Goal 3:** Expand Access to Community Resources *(addresses the environment)*	Increase mobility options for people and goods. Foster a healthy, educated, well trained, safe, and secure population Promote places to live with easy access to jobs and services. Improve energy efficiency while preserving the region's environment. Identify innovative approaches to economic recovery and long-term prosperity.

Project prioritization and selection is organized around "key decision points" (KDPs) in a 4-step process (*see Figure 7*):

Figure 7. Key Decision Points (KDP) to Prioritize Projects in *Plan 2040*



Source: ARC Plan 2040

- **KDP 1: Allocate funding across program areas** – The KDP 1 stage identifies needs across program areas, establishes desired level of performance within each program area, and then allocates the level of funding needed to achieve desired performance.

- **KDP 2: Policy Filter** – The KDP 2 stage reviews potential projects within each program area to ensure consistency with stated RTP policies, study recommendations, and desired ARC Board direction, such as:

    - Is the project consistent with the regional growth vision adopted in the Unified Growth Policy Map?
    - Is the project identified as a congested facility?
    - Is there an immediate safety need?
    - Is the project already in the pipeline?

  Projects that are consistent with stated policies are considered eligible and move on to KDP 3. Those that are inconsistent with stated policies are removed from consideration for Federal funding.

- **KDP 3: Project Evaluation** – The KDP 2 stage evaluates potential projects against project-level performance measures, both qualitative and quantitative. Project-level performance measures were selected based on the following guiding principles:

    - Vital few measures
    - Easy to communicate, transparent
    - Existing, readily available data and tools
    - Draw on existing methods and measures
    - Link to RTP Emphasis Areas

- Only projects that affect conformity (typically roadway expansion projects and transit expansion projects) are evaluated. In addition, the Congestion Management Plan is used as a screen to identify congested corridors, and the most congested corridors receive preference in the project evaluation process. A total composite score is assigned to each project, which represents a weighted average of evaluation criteria. A cost-effectiveness index is then developed, and projects are put into four tiers based on where they rank on the index.

- **KDP 4: Recommend Projects for Inclusion in Constrained RTP –** The KDP 4 stage takes additional factors into consideration, and then the ARC Board makes final project selection decisions. Additional considerations include:

    - Public / stakeholder input
    - Project sponsor priorities
    - Regional equity
    - Project readiness

TransLink: Vancouver

Tamim Raad, Director of Strategic Planning and Policy
Geoff Cross, Senior Transportation Planner

TransLink is the regional transportation authority for Vancouver, British Columbia Canada. It has primary responsibilities over the planning and management of the region's public transportation, regional bicycling, commuter options, and shared responsibilities for the Major Road Network , including several major bridges. It is the first North American transportation authority to be

responsible for planning, financing and managing all public transit, as well as major regional roads and bridges.

TransLink prepares a 30-year long-range plan, as well as a fully funded 10-year Transportation and Financial Base Plan, which is updated every year.[3] The current long-range plan is *Transport 2040*. It includes a number of goals:

- Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation will be aggressively reduced, in support of Federal, provincial and regional targets.
- Most trips will be by transit, walking and cycling.
- The majority of jobs and housing in the region will be located along the Frequent Transit Network.
- Traveling in the region will be safe, secure, and accessible for everyone.
- Economic growth and efficient goods movement will be facilitated through effective management of the transportation network.
- Funding for TransLink will be stable, sufficient, appropriate and influences transportation choices.

Transportation 2040 goals are supported by four investment strategies:

1. Make early investments that encourage development of communities designed for transit, cycling, and walking.
2. Optimize the use of the region's transportation assets and keep those assets in good repair.
3. Build and operate a safe, secure, and accessible transportation system.
4. Diversify revenue sources and pursue new and innovative ways to fund transportation.

TransLink prioritizes all investments considered for inclusion in the 10-year Financial Base Plan. In 2010, TransLink updated its project prioritization process in order to:

- Create a performance-based process to increase external credibility and improve internal alignment of activities.
- Operationalize *Transport 2040* goals in a “meaningful, measurable and monitorable” way.
- Incorporate specific “supplemental themes” into the evaluation framework that respond to input from the Transportation Commissions and regional stakeholders:
    - Recognizes significant lost opportunity if not activated in 2010
    - Leverages significant other funding
    - Makes best use of existing fleet and infrastructure
    - Notes the nature of previous commitments
- Include consistent outcomes and horizons for all initiatives.
- Establish minimum performance thresholds for inclusion in the plan.

[3] There are similarities between TransLink’s and other peer agencies’ transportation planning processes, but TransLink does not follow metropolitan transportation planning rules because it is a Canadian agency.

- Provide clear guidance and expectations for future planning.

A Content Review Committee comprised of senior TransLink staff developed the objectives that support *Transportation 2040* goals and "supplemental themes" noted above, and used them as criteria to evaluate and score projects (*see Figure 8 below*). This committee worked with TransLink's policy and technical boards, municipal agencies, regional stakeholder groups, and community representatives to refine the framework and scoring. The result was a prioritized list of projects that made the base threshold to be funded and included in the plan. Final weighting of the evaluation criteria was left to the discretion of the TransLink Board.

Figure 8. Goals and Evaluation Objectives for TransLink Project Prioritization

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Transport 2040 Related (50 per cent)	
GHGs Aggressively Reduced	Reduces VKT
	Improves system operations and efficiency
	Greater use of low emission fleet technology
	Greater use of low carbon content fuel
Non SOV Mode Share	Protect existing transit ridership
	Promotes shifts to transit, cycling and walking
	Encourages future shifts to transit, cycling and walking
	Influences smart transportation choices
Complete Communities	Encourages complete and transit-oriented communities
	Expands access to regional transit and cycling networks
	Promotes regional mobility
System Optimization	Encourages modal integration
	Improves the resilience of the transportation system
	Improves system safety
	Promotes universal accessibility
Economic Growth & Goods Movement	Supports efficient access to regional centers and economic gateways
	Reduces congestion
	Improves travel time reliability
Financially Sustainable	Maximizes leveraging opportunities
	Make efficient use of existing infrastructure
	Prioritizes cost-effectiveness
	Prioritizes long-term growth in cost-effectiveness
2011 Supplement Priorities (50 per cent)	
Significant Lost Opportunity if Not Activated in 2010	Leaves money on the table
	Dependence with other programs
	Significantly more expensive to do later
	Results in loss of passengers from the system
Leverages Significant Other Funding	Extent of capital contribution
	Impact on operating Costs
	Impact on fare revenue
Makes Best Use of Existing Fleet & Infrastructure	Improves efficiency of existing assets
	Improves effectiveness in utilizing assets
Intensity of Previous Commitment	Nature of TransLink's commitment
	Importance of commitment to stakeholders

Source: TransLink

VI. Conclusion

This TPCB peer exchange convened four regional transportation planning agencies to discuss their experiences, challenges, and creative approaches to project prioritization for LRTP.

Key findings from the exchange about how to develop a meaningful and effective project prioritization process in the LRTP are:

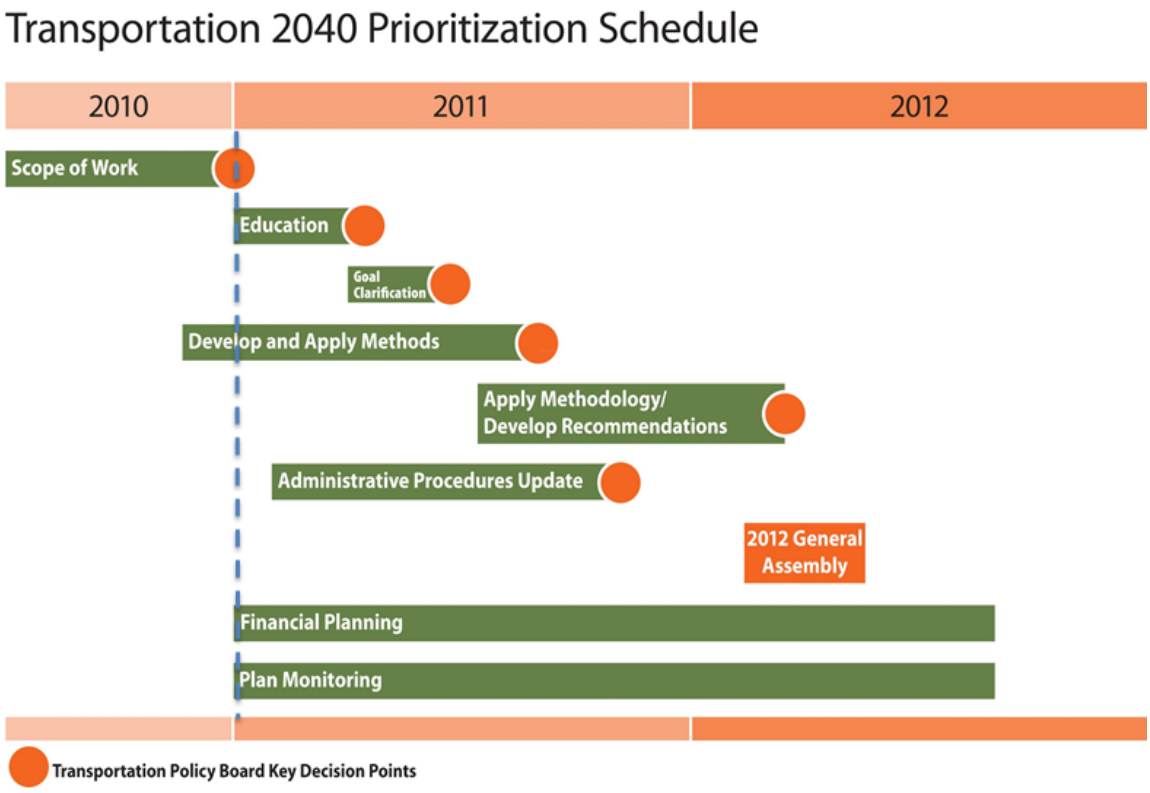
- Setting a vision, then defining goals and objectives to support it is a critical step to develop an effective project prioritization process.
- Articulating a project prioritization process is an important outreach tool that can increase transparency and build trust with the public.
- Performance management plays an important role in developing an effective project prioritization process.
- There is no “one size fits all” approach to project prioritization.
- It is important to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools and analysis to develop a meaningful prioritization process.
- Weighting of project prioritization criteria should be left to the discretion of each agency’s decisionmaking boards.
- Peer agencies tend to focus their prioritization efforts on projects that add new capacity and on funding sources that they have direct decisionmaking authority over.
- Preservation and maintenance of the existing system is a focus for all peer agencies, but these areas are typically funded on a programmatic basis, rather than as individual projects.
- Transportation modeling is extremely important for providing guidance on the anticipated outcomes of investments, but clearly communicating the limitations and constraints and using other experiential inputs to triangulate ranges of outcomes can help build credibility and support.

VII. Next Steps

PSRC staff report that the TPCB peer exchange contributed significant value to the policy discussions being held in the Central Puget Sound Region. PSRC will continue to use the information shared during the TPCB peer exchange to inform its committees and decisionmaking bodies as it moves forward in the development of its project prioritization methodology.

Figure 9 (*see below*) displays the schedule for developing a *Transportation 2040* project prioritization process. Information shared during the peer exchange has contributed to the scoping phase of this schedule and lessons learned during the peer exchange will be a valuable tool for shaping each step of this work. Beginning in the winter 2011, PSRC will also begin an education task to inform policy-makers about how PSRC’s existing processes could be modified to learn from effective practices and lessons learned from peer agencies. Information learned from the peer exchange will continue to be examined as the regional planners and decisionmakers work through goal clarification and evaluation methods development as well. This will be an iterative process; several quantitative and qualitative factors will be tested for effectiveness in the final evaluation framework.

Figure 9. Transportation 2040 Prioritization Schedule



VIII. About the Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program

The TPCB is a joint venture of the FHWA and the FTA that delivers products and services to provide information, training, and technical assistance to the transportation professionals responsible for planning for the capital, operating, and maintenance needs of our nation's surface transportation system. The TPCB Program Web site (www.planning.dot.gov) serves as a one-stop clearinghouse for state-of-the-practice transportation planning information and resources. This includes over 70 peer exchange reports covering a wide range of transportation planning topics.

The TPCB Peer Program advances the state of the practice in multimodal transportation planning nationwide by organizing, facilitating, and documenting peer events to share noteworthy practices among State DOTs, MPOs, transit agencies, and local and Tribal transportation planning agencies. During peer events, transportation planning staff interacts with one another to share information, accomplishments, and lessons learned from the field and help one another overcome shared transportation planning challenges.

IX. Appendix

A. Agenda

Time	*Agenda Item*
8:30 am	**TPCB Welcome and Overview** TPCB staff welcomes everyone, review the TPCB program mission/goals, describe documentation/follow-up, and establish ground rules for discussions.
8:35 am	**PSRC Welcome and Goals** PSRC welcomes participants and opens the exchange. Provides context on what motivated the peer exchange request and PSRC goals for the day.
8:40 am	**Peer Agency Introduction and Goals** Peer and other participating staff quickly share their goals for the day, including any specific information they hope to gather during the exchange.
8:45 am	**Opening Comments from PSRC** PSRC provides brief introductory presentation (*10-15 min, 5 min Q&A*). More detailed information will be shared during discussion sections later in the day. Key presentation topics: • Current procedures for project prioritization in the long-range transportation plan • Vision for future approach • Challenges facing PSRC
9:15 am	**Opening Comments from Peers – MTC, DVRPC, ARC, TransLink** Each agency provides high-level summary presentation (*15-20 min, 5 min Q&A*). More detailed information will be shared during discussion sections in the afternoon. Key presentation topics/questions: • Overview of project and program prioritization processes within the long-range transportation plan • What drives the prioritization approach (e.g., vision, scenario planning, regional comprehensive plan)? • How is the long-range prioritization process linked to regional project programming and parallel planning efforts like the congestion management process? • How does the prioritization process address emerging issues such as livability, greenhouse gas emissions, public health, etc.? • High level summary of challenges, institutional barriers, and opportunities
10:45	*Break*
11:00 am	**Open Question & Answer / Discussion** PSRC councilors, stakeholders, and other audience members ask questions about specific areas of interest in response to peer presentations. Peers also ask questions of one another and members of the audience.
noon	*Lunch*

1:00 pm	**What – Scope of Prioritization Within the Long-Range Transportation Plan** Key questions: • Which projects and programs are prioritized within the long-range transportation plan? • Is this process applied to all projects/programs in the plan regardless of funding source? What about projects that are partially funded, programmatic items (e.g., preservation, maintenance, operations), and local projects?
2:00 pm	**How – Procedures and Project/Program Evaluation Methodology/Criteria** Key questions: • What is your project screening process for the long-range transportation plan? • What evaluation and ranking methodology do you use to prioritize projects for the long-range transportation plan? • What criteria are used to prioritize projects? What issues have you encountered with multiple (sometimes conflicting) criteria? • How do you integrate technical and qualitative evaluations for projects in the long-range plan? What are the opportunities/limitations of integrating these two types of analyses?
3:00	*Break*
3:15	**What is the End Result?** Key questions: • What does the plan look like when it is done? • Is there a regional agenda – single ranking of priorities or by mode/program? • How does the regional priority influence local priority or decisions? • How are projects/programs moved within the plan or removed from it?
4:15	**Wrap Up / Take Aways** • What lessons learned and advice do you have for PSRC as they move forward to develop their prioritization process? What are the most effective solutions you have developed to specific challenges you faced? • What are the best practices heard from the event? • Next steps?
4:50	**Closing Remarks and Evaluation**

B. Participant List

Name	Organization	Email
Peer Organization		
Doug Kimsey	Planning Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)	DKimsey@mtc.ca.gov
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Other		
Emily Aptouton	City of Gig Harbor	
Cliff Benson	Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Russ Blount	City of Fife Pierce County TCC	
Kim Brackett	Councilmember, City of Bainbridge Island PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Dan Burke	Port of Seattle PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Steve Butler	City of Mill Creek PSRC Regional Staff Committee	
Dongho Chang	City of Everett PSRC Regional Traffic Operations Committee	
Dr. Anthony Chen	Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department PSRC Growth Management Policy Board	
Wendy Clark-Getzin	Kitsap Transit PSRC Transportation Operators Committee	

Dori Costa	City of Seattle PSRC Regional Staff Committee	
Kim Daughtry	Councilmember, City of Lake Stevens	
Aubrey Davis	PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Becky Erickson	Mayor, City of Poulsbo PSRC Executive Board	
Bobann Fogard	Snohomish County PSRC Regional Staff Committee	
Dick Ford	Commissioner, State Transportation Commission PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Don Gerend	Mayor, City of Sammamish PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Noel Gerken	Mayor, City of Maple Valley Transportation Policy Board	
Tessa Greegor	Cascade Bicycle Club	
Matt Hansen	King County Metro Transit PSRC TDM Steering Committee	
Peter Heffernan	King County Department of Transportation PSRC Regional Project Evaluation Committee King County Project Evaluation Committee	
Max Hepp-Buchanan	Cascade Bicycle Club	
Jemae Hoffman	City of Seattle Department of Transportation	
Kathy Johnston	Washington State Dept. of Transportation	
Bill LaBorde	Office of Seattle Councilman Tom Rasmussen	
Roberta Lewandowski	Futurwise Alternate – PSRC Growth Management Policy Board	
Brian Mannelly	Port of Tacoma	
Jeanette McKague	Washington Realtors Alternate - PSRC Growth Management Policy Board	
Mary McLure	Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council	
Stephen Misiurak	City of Gig Harbor	
Dennis Neuzil		
Victor Obeso	King County Metro Transit PSRC Transportation Operators Committee	
Peter Plumeau	Resource Systems Group	
Gary Predoehl	Pierce County	

Janet Ray	AAA Washington PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Mian Rice	Turner Construction Alternate – PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Mel Roberts	Kent Bicycle Advisory Board	
Bob Sahm	King County Metro Transit PSRC Special Needs Transportation Committee	
Marianne Seifert	Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department	
Amy Shumann	Seattle-King County Public Health PSRC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee	
Dave Somors	Councilmember, Snohomish County PSRC Growth Management Policy Board	
Stacy Trussler	Washington State Department of Transportation PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Mark Weed	Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce PSRC Transportation Policy Board	
Diane Wiatr	City of Tacoma	
Don Willot	North Kitsap Trails Association	
Shuming Yan	Washington State Department of Transportation	